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**PROJETO GRÁFICO EDITORIAL PARA O LIVRO DA
ASTRÓLOGA DANA GERHARDT**

Projeto de Conclusão de Curso
submetido ao Curso de Design da
Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina
para a obtenção do Grau de Bacharel em
Design

Orientadora: Prof^ª. Dr^a Mary Vonni
Meürer de Lima.

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ASTRÓLOGA DANA GERHARDT**

Esta Projeto de Conclusão de Curso foi julgado adequado para obtenção do Título de “Bacharel”, e aprovado em sua forma final pelo Curso de Design da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina

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Dedico esse trabalho para Dana Gerhardt, a autora do livro. Ler os seus textos me trouxe alegria e apoio em momentos de confusão, me ajudou a reencontrar o interesse na leitura, no design, e na humanidade. Eu não estou nem exagerando. Obrigado por dividir conosco sua compreensão desse fino tecido que envolve a existência.

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RESUMO

Esse trabalho consiste na descrição do processo de criação do projeto gráfico editorial de um livro fictício de astrologia, e acompanha as fases de definição da ideia do projeto, pesquisa e execução. Foi proposto, nesse trabalho de conclusão de curso, a elaboração de doze propostas visuais diferentes, que representariam os doze arquétipos do zodíaco; essas propostas foram elaboradas como partes de um projeto editorial maior, o livro “The Signs and Hercules’ Twelve Labors”.

Palavras-chave: Design Editorial, Livro, Astrologia, Arquétipos.

ABSTRACT

This paper describes the process of creation of the graphic-editorial project of a fictional astrology book, following all of its phases, the idea definition, the research and the execution. In this graduation conclusion work, twelve different visual proposals were created, each representing one of the zodiac archetypes; these proposals were developed as segments of a bigger editorial project, the book “The Signs and Hercules’ Twelve Labors”.

Keywords: Editorial Design, Book, Astrology, Archetypes.

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1. INTRODUÇÃO

1.1 Ideia e pergunta do projeto

Muito do estudo da astrologia parte do entendimento de arquétipos, personagens que incorporam as características fundamentais de uma ideia, e que podem ser expressados em imagens, sons, texturas e também através de comportamentos. Muitas vezes, nos conteúdos sobre astrologia, o arquétipo é interpretado apenas através de mitos, contos e comportamentos, e geralmente de maneira racional e objetiva, pouco havendo a preocupação de explorar metáforas visuais ou gráficas que favoreçam uma compreensão intuitiva do conteúdo.

O design gráfico, como prática projetual, é capaz de transmitir uma carga de conceitos imateriais graficamente, representando ideias e conceitos através de formas, cores, etc.. e, por meio da produção editorial, pode-se não só tornar um texto mais fácil de se ler, mas também pode ser usado como ferramenta para comunicar graficamente, o conteúdo do texto, através de elementos como a tipografia e o grid. Dessa maneira, o projeto gráfico de um livro poderia expressar arquétipos astrológicos, assim como pode expressar sentimentos e sensações, como alegria, calor, limpeza, ou mistério.

Como representar então, de maneira gráfica e usando uma linguagem editorial, os conceitos arquetípicos expressados em um texto de astrologia?

1.2 Contexto Geral

A Astrologia é um estudo que se baseia na relação dos astros celestes com eventos terrestres. O estudo da astrologia é milenar e “influenciou o pensamento de todas as culturas, cujos pictogramas ainda permanecem intactos” (MULLER, 2001), tendo suas raízes por volta de 3.000 a.C. na Mesopotâmia, quando se realizavam cálculos a partir do calendário para prever padrões sazonais e interpretar os ciclos celestiais como sinais de comunicação com o divino; a partir daí o estudo foi aprimorado pelos egípcios, hindus, chineses, árabes, gregos e romanos (GOODAVAGE, 1966). Na Grécia do século VI a.C., o estudo foi unido à tradição mitológica, as dramáticas histórias dos deuses e deusas foram associadas aos planetas e às constelações, e a astrologia assumiu o formato que conhecemos hoje (MULLER, 2001).

O estudo da Astrologia se difundiu no mundo inteiro, mantendo-se consistente aos padrões, ideias e princípios de sua tradição até o século

XVII, quando sua popularidade foi drasticamente reduzida devido à corrente de pensamento iluminista, que menosprezava o estudo pela falta de validade científica. Futuramente, com o retorno à espiritualidade e a filosofia New Age do século XIX, a Astrologia recuperou sua popularidade, e tornou-se objeto de estudo de artistas, antropólogos e psicólogos, que reconheceram a astrologia como um vasto repertório da experiência humana, que poderia ser usado para entender melhor o inconsciente coletivo; o psicólogo Carl C. Jung (2010) afirmou que seu “valor psicológico é inexorável, pois representa a soma de todo o conhecimento psicológico da antiguidade.” Essa conexão com a psicologia foi reforçada por astrólogos como Dane Rudhyar e Alan Leo, que defendiam uma abordagem da astrologia voltada ao indivíduo e seus aspectos psicológicos (HAND, 2016).

A astrologia estuda personalidades, relações mundanas e situações da vida humana as associando com o movimento dos astros no céu, e lida com quatro elementos básicos: signos, planetas, casas e aspectos. Ao todo existem doze signos do zodíaco, e cada um desses constitui a representação de um arquétipo (SHALDERS, 1982), ou seja, um modelo idealizado de comportamento e pensamento (PLENTZ, 2005). Os arquétipos estão presente em diferentes tempos e civilizações, assumindo novas formas e representações, mas sempre mantendo sua essência, pois são imagens humanas universais e primordiais (JUNG, 1980).

A existência do arquétipo é percebida através de suas inúmeras imagens e símbolos (PETRI e SILVA, 2004), representados, entre muitas maneiras, na arte, na religião, na ciência e em especial na mitologia (PLENTZ, 2005), pois através dos mitos, os arquétipos são expressos em estrutura narrativa, personificados numa história (PETRI e SILVA, 2004). Essa relação dos arquétipos com os mitos é explorada pela autora Dana Gerhardt em praticamente toda a sua obra, especialmente em uma série de textos publicados no site *Astrodienst*, (astro.com). Esses textos associam os doze signos do zodíaco aos doze trabalhos de Hércules, interpretando o mito do herói como a jornada do ser que busca a evolução de sua alma através do trabalho consciente da psique, representada, em seus diferentes aspectos, pelos 12 signos do zodíaco. Ao mesmo tempo, Dana Gerhardt traz os arquétipos para o contexto atual, pontuando suas expressões no século XXI e com metáforas e exemplos da cultura popular.

Esses textos trazem, por si só, uma expressão dos arquétipos, mas essa expressão pode ser amplificada com a criação de um projeto gráfico que incorpore essas imagens e metáforas como referências, buscando analogias dos conceitos arquetípicos na linguagem editorial.

1.3 Objetivos

1.3.1 Objetivo Geral

Desenvolver o Projeto Gráfico Editorial de uma publicação com os textos da autora Dana Gerhardt sobre os 12 signos astrológicos, de modo que cada texto expresse, visualmente, os conceitos que definem cada signo.

1.3.2 Objetivos Específicos

- Analisar o contexto geral do projeto, coletando informações sobre a autora e seus trabalhos.
- Coletar informações sobre produtos similares e sobre o público, buscando direcionamento e apoio para o projeto.
- Interpretar as pesquisas para extrair diretrizes, selecionar a melhor mídia, e determinar um escopo para a execução, garantindo a coesão do projeto.
- Extrair conceitos visuais a partir dos textos da autora, materializando-os em linguagem editorial, a partir de fundamentos de teoria da forma e composição.

1.4 Justificativa

Atualmente, grande parte das páginas e sites de astrologia populares oferecem um conteúdo rápido e prático, mas muitas vezes simplório; os artigos escritos por Dana Gerhardt diferem-se pois são profundos e exploram os signos do zodíaco em amplitude com uma linguagem leve e compreensível. Os textos da autora não dão respostas e fórmulas prontas para a interpretação, e sim buscam desenvolver uma percepção e um entendimento mais amplo dos arquétipos; mas são extensos e o conteúdo que trazem é complexo, e isso pode afastar leitores que estão acostumados a conteúdos rasos e rápidos.

É inegável que um bom projeto de design não só pode comunicar melhor esse conteúdo como também torná-lo mais atrativo. Além disso, se os conhecimentos de produção editorial forem aliados aos conceitos trazidos para cada signo nos textos, a própria organização desse conteúdo poderá informar o leitor sobre os arquétipos do zodíaco de maneira intuitiva e visual, o que o ajudará a compreender os signos em sua profundidade. Dessa forma, essa proposta aproximará as pessoas que se

interessam por astrologia dos textos de Dana Gerhardt, porque propiciará experiências de leitura mais ricas e referências gráficas aos arquétipos dentro do próprio texto, agregando valor ao produto e facilitando a compreensão de seu conteúdo.

Além disso, o projeto permitirá desenvolver habilidades de interpretação e aplicação de conceitos, transformando as metáforas e os mitos dos signos em conceitos aplicáveis em design. A diagramação desses textos permitirá o uso de conhecimentos relativos à teoria da forma, semiótica e editoração, à medida que as estéticas dos signos forem materializadas em um projeto gráfico coeso e expressivo.

1.5 Delimitação do projeto

O projeto em questão se apoiará na coleta de informações relativas ao tema dos textos, à autora Dana Gerhardt, a publicações similares e ao público. O produto final do projeto será uma publicação dos 12 textos criados pela autora, referentes aos signos do zodíaco, em sua língua original, inglês, pois esses textos não foram traduzidos para o português, nem nenhum de seus livros ou *ebooks*. As imagens e ilustrações usadas na diagramação desse material não serão produzidas pelo autor do projeto.

Não foi identificada identidade visual consistente no site ou nos materiais da autora Dana Gerhardt; portanto, a criação deste projeto gráfico não será pautada em nenhum padrão gráfico pré-definido. Também não será proposta uma identidade visual para a autora ou para o site *Mooncircles*, mas somente uma abordagem visual diferente, focada no produto editorial.

1.6 Metodologia

Não foi encontrada nenhuma metodologia específica para o design editorial que se adeque a este projeto, portanto será empregada, a metodologia para a produção em Design Gráfico proposta por Jorge Frascara, descrita em seu livro “Communication Design: Principles, Methods and Practice”(2004). Essa metodologia foi escolhida porque, quando comparada a outras voltadas ao design gráfico, como a de Bruno Munari e Bruce Archer (apud. FUENTES, 2009), mostrou-se mais clara e acessível, com uma sequência bem ordenada e apropriada ao projeto.

Em seu livro, Frascara (2004) divide o processo de design da seguinte maneira:

- Encomenda do projeto (Primeira definição do problema)
- Coleta de informação
- Segunda definição do problema
- Definição dos objetivos
- Terceira definição do problema
- Desenvolvimento da proposta de design
- Apresentação ao cliente
- Organização da produção
- Supervisão da implementação
- Avaliação da performance

Para este projeto, algumas adequações à essa estrutura foram feitas: a metodologia proposta por Frascara será seguida somente da primeira à sétima fase; a definição da ideia será considerada como a encomenda do projeto, e a defesa do PCC, na banca examinadora, como a apresentação para o cliente. A terceira e a quarta fases da metodologia foram unidas em uma só pela proximidade de execução.

A Figura 1 a seguir esquematiza a metodologia usada no projeto

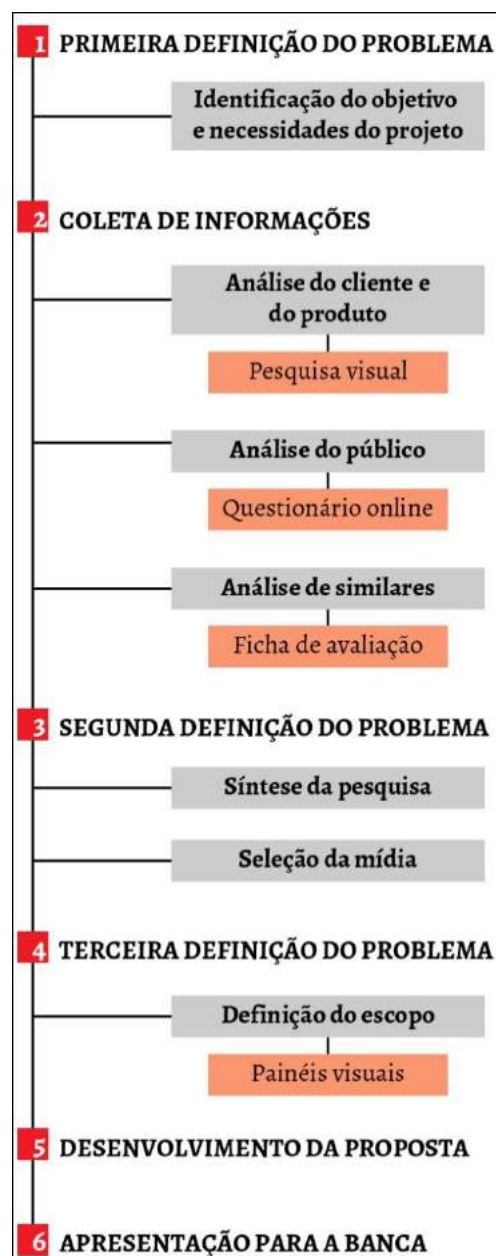


Figura 1: Metodologia usada no projeto

1.6.1 Primeira definição do problema.

Essa fase é chamada, no livro de Frascara, de “encomenda do trabalho pelo cliente”; aqui, optou-se por chamá-la de primeira definição do problema, considerando que não há um cliente nem uma encomenda que inicia o projeto. Frascara (2004) descreve que essa fase envolve a definição de um orçamento e a primeira definição do problema, feita pelo próprio cliente que contrata o designer, explicitando-lhe suas necessidades ou desejos e um objetivo. Nesse caso, no presente estudo foi definida a ideia do projeto. E, partindo do tema e da pergunta previamente definidos, foi feito um estudo do contexto geral em que os textos objeto do projeto estão inseridos, buscando-se definir o objetivo essencial da proposta e identificar as necessidades primordiais que ela apresentou.

1.6.2 Coleta de informação

Nessa fase, na qual se busca acumular informações sobre o cliente, o produto, a concorrência (se existe) e o público, foram analisados os trabalhos já publicados da autora Dana Gerhardt, seus *ebooks* e artigos de revistas, bem como a sua imagem coordenada e a do site Mooncircles, na busca da definição de uma imagem clara do cliente. Essa descrição ajudou a colocar o projeto em contexto, considerando que “uma gama extensa de possibilidades se abre quando se investiga em detalhes o contexto que circunda um determinado produto de design” (FRASCARA, 2004). Também foi analisado o conteúdo dos textos que serão diagramados, para uma definição clara do tom, linguagem e progressão dos artigos, aliando-se depois esses elementos ao projeto editorial.

Frascara ainda pontua que “outro elemento a se considerar é a análise de produtos similares, incluindo concorrentes, se estes existem. Uma caixa de leite, um livro, ou um anúncio são exemplos em que a análise da concorrência é essencial” (2004). Seguindo o recomendado por Frascara, foram buscados produtos similares e definido, a partir disso, quem eram os concorrentes.

Por último, foram coletadas informações sobre o público, tanto para conhecer seus hábitos e interesses em relação ao conteúdo e possíveis canais, como também para analisar suas reações frente aos livros já publicados e a produtos similares.

Para cada uma desses eixos de pesquisa (cliente e produto, público e similares), foi escolhida uma ferramenta adequada ao propósito e situação. Para a fase de coleta de informação sobre o cliente e o produto, dada as condições, foi escolhida a ferramenta de Pesquisa Visual, descrita

por Ellen Lupton em seu livro “Intuição, Ação, Criação: Graphic Design Thinking” (2013). Para a análise do público, optou-se por elaborar um questionário online a ser divulgado em meios que estudantes e leitores de astrologia tenham acesso. Para o estudo de similares, decidiu-se elaborar uma ficha de avaliação, fragmentando e direcionando a análise.

1.6.3 Segunda definição do problema

Nessa fase em que a informação coletada foi analisada e interpretada, colaborando para o desenvolvimento dos critérios de design, foram sintetizadas das pesquisas as informações detalhadas do que então deve ser feito ou evitado, durante o projeto, para que tudo transcorresse como o planejado; comparando as informações com aquelas recolhidas durante a fase de primeira definição do problema. “Toda a informação coletada forma a base para o processo de design, mas não o determina. Isso leva à segunda definição do problema” (FRASCARA, 2004).

Foi importante manter o foco no objetivo principal do produto, para que se soubesse, durante a interpretação dos dados, o que exatamente estava sendo medido e por que. Frascara também esclarece que “pesquisas indicam tendências - isto é, forças e fraquezas - não a presença ou ausência de um interesse. Preferências públicas são sempre expressas em níveis de intensidade que devem ser interpretadas” (2004).

Uma vez realizada a interpretação dos dados, e feita a segunda definição do problema, foi possível ter uma compreensão mais abrangente do projeto e da implementação do produto. Nessa fase foram definidos o canal de comunicação que levariam o produto ao público - livro físico ou livro digital -, a abordagem cognitiva e afetiva do produto e a forma perceptiva e estética que o produto assumiria. A análise das possibilidades e das limitações do meio escolhido e do público levam à terceira definição do problema. (FRASCARA, 2004)

1.6.4 Terceira definição do problema

Nessa fase, foram definidas, baseando-se em toda a pesquisa realizada até então, as especificações de projeto e produção. Foram também traçados referenciais claros para garantir os objetivos funcionais e comunicacionais do projeto, ou seja, orientações de formas, tipografia e imagens, o que permitiu uma compreensão mais clara da proposta de design que será produzida.

Para materializar e organizar essas especificações, foi usada a ferramenta de Painéis Visuais proposta por Mike Baxter (2000). Baxter

propõe que sejam desenvolvidos três painéis que irão, por meio de imagens, traçar o estilo de vida dos futuros consumidores do produto, a expressão do produto e o tema visual.

1.6.5 Desenvolvimento da proposta

Durante essa fase, o conteúdo, a forma, a mídia e a tecnologia de produção foram definidos e materializados tendo por base todo o estudo feito na primeira etapa do PCC. Considerando que a proposta do produto é de que o texto de cada signo tenha um estilo visual próprio, essas definições irão dizer respeito ao escopo geral da publicação, afinal todos esses textos, com seus estilos únicos, deverão conversar entre si de modo a se tornar uma só obra. Foram então extraídos os conceitos de cada signo a partir da leitura dos textos, e esses conceitos alteraram o escopo da publicação de modo a torná-lo expressivo.

1.6.6 Apresentação ao cliente

Esta foi a última fase da execução do projeto e consistiu em descrever os passos da metodologia desenvolvida e como esses passos levaram ao resultado final que foi apresentado para a banca examinadora.

As três últimas fases da metodologia de Frascara; Organização da produção, Supervisão da implementação e Avaliação da performance, não foram executadas nesse projeto, uma vez que a publicação não foi impressa ou comercializada.

2. DESENVOLVIMENTO

2.1 Primeira definição do problema

Seguindo a metodologia de Jorge Frascara, o processo de design se inicia com a primeira definição do problema, que é dada, geralmente, pela encomenda do trabalho pelo cliente. Nesse momento busca-se, a partir de ferramentas como o *briefing*, “estabelecer em poucas palavras quais são as necessidades que se têm de cobrir e todos os aspectos que deverão ser levados em conta do ponto de vista do cliente antes de gerar o trabalho ou a proposta de comunicação” (FUENTES, 2006), cabendo ao designer extrair do cliente o contexto completo do projeto, identificando soluções que talvez não estejam claras. Nas palavras de Rodolfo Fuentes (2006), “Todos esses aspectos serão analisados cuidadosamente com o propósito de levantar uma estrutura informativa tão completa e consistente que nos permita, em seguida, em aparente paradoxo, realizar o projeto com maior liberdade.” No caso desta proposta de projeto, a interação entre a autora e o designer, limitou-se à autorização para a realização do projeto, e na falta de um *briefing*, entrevista ou mesmo texto de encomenda, foi realizado um estudo abrangente sobre a autora Dana Gerhardt e sobre os textos por ela publicados, buscando alinhar a ideia do projeto com o contexto real apresentado e definir o objetivo e as necessidades do produto que se deseja obter.

Dana Gerhardt é uma astróloga reconhecida internacionalmente por seus workshops, livros e textos, que foram veiculados em inúmeros sites e publicações de astrologia. Um dos diferenciais de Dana é que seus textos não se apoiam em estereótipos rasos e interpretações simples, ao contrário disso, incentivam uma exploração profunda dos temas, abordando-os com uma visão mais complexa. Dana escreve sobre os planetas, signos, ciclos da lua e casas, mesclando o conhecimento simbólico com noções de psicologia e antropologia, depoimentos reais, anedotas, contos populares e interpretações mitológicas, tudo em um mesmo texto. Tudo isso contribui para que alcance o objetivo de alimentar o leitor com um conhecimento complexo e dinâmico desses elementos, ao invés de entregar a ele uma interpretação rasa e genérica dos temas.

Dana Gerhardt também tem um site pessoal, em que ela escreve regularmente, em seu blog, e no qual ela vende relatórios personalizados e *ebooks*; todos esses textos abordam seus temas de maneira mais ampla do que os textos convencionais da área. Na Figura 2 abaixo, é mostrada a seção de *ebooks* do site.

HOME FREE CHARTS & EBOOKS DANA'S BLOG RITUALS MOON VENUS READINGS WITH DANA SHOP

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Naked Astrology Pre-Release Special

THE ELEMENTS AND MODELS
by Dana L. Comaroff

Naked Astrology
by Dana L. Comaroff

THE ASTRO PLAYBOOK
by Dana L. Comaroff

Dana's Astro ebooks

Dana's writing, "brings the meaning of the planets to life like no other writer in this field. She's the Meryl Streep of astrological writers: smart, sane, and insightful."
-Jeff Jewet, The Mountain Astrologer

Astrology charts, like crystal balls, are made for intuitive perception. Gazing into these sacred circles, your intuition can summon surprising and accurate insights, beyond what your logical mind can ever know.

Yet we learn astrology the same way we learn most things—with the logical mind. Bringing the analytical mind to the task of symbol reading is like bringing surgical tools to ballet class. It's the wrong equipment.

Naked Astrology is the first astrology education program that's designed to bring your intuitive mind into your training from the beginning. It's visual. It's imaginative. It's playful. And it's sensuous. Everything you need to get started is in my 3 Naked Astrology ebooks:

I won't be officially releasing this package until Fall, but I'm offering a special pre-release discount to anyone who'd like to start now. The package is nearly complete, I'm writing just a few more chapters this summer. If you order now, you'll save \$10 off the Fall price of \$45 and I'll email you the new chapters when the package is officially released.

Pre-Release Special is \$35 for all 3 Naked Astrology books

Praise for Dana's Articles

"Even though we don't know each other, you've been such an influence on my life through your articles. They are so refreshing, so illuminating, and sensitive. Many times you've helped me to feel good about myself."
-Liz, Honolulu, HI

"Just finished your article on the 4th house and it was a real eye opener about all that goes on in it."

Figura 2: Seção de *ebooks* do site *Mooncircles*

Fonte: mooncircles.com

A autora defende, em seu site, que a astrologia é feita de percepção intuitiva e que nós nos acostumamos a aprendê-la da maneira convencional, usando lógica racional, e acrescenta que isso é como trazer ferramentas cirúrgicas pra aula de balé; não é o equipamento certo. Os livros que ela vende são anunciados como “visuais, imaginativos e divertidos”.

Alguns dos textos escritos por Dana foram publicados no site *Astrodienst* (astro.com), um dos sites mais famosos de astrologia, atualmente, e que registra mais de seis milhões de visitantes mensais. O site abrange um público amplo, de iniciantes a profissionais. De acordo com Liz Greene, uma das autoras do site, o “Astrodienst não está interessado em competir com o mercado de massa de astrologia solar simples, mas em utilizar a astrologia para explorar as camadas e motivações mais profundas da natureza humana”. A série de 12 textos

que foi escolhida para este projeto, chamada Os Signos e os Doze Trabalhos de Hércules, foi publicada neste site.

Os textos selecionados chamam a atenção por sua complexidade. Muitos sites e páginas de astrologia costumam se limitar a textos mais curtos, simples e rasos e que promovem um conteúdo mais direto e prático; contudo, é na falta de praticidade e objetividade dos textos de Dana que está seu diferencial. Na série em questão, cada signo é associado a um dos trabalhos realizados pelo herói Hércules, da mitologia grega, sugerindo que os doze signos representam diferentes aspectos da psique humana que devem ser compreendidos, e que os trabalhos de Hércules oferecem ao leitor metáforas para enfrentar os desafios que surgem com cada um desses aspectos. Dana escreve de forma despretensiosa, passando pelos mais variados assuntos sem nunca dar fórmulas prontas para a interpretação dos signos, e buscando desenvolver no leitor um conhecimento profundo e uma percepção aguçada dos arquétipos.

O objetivo da publicação que resultaria ao fim do projeto seria de ser um material de estudo de um nível mais avançado da astrologia. Ela não deveria ser voltada somente a profissionais, já que a linguagem é simples e os conhecimentos são acessíveis, mas deveria se diferenciar dos materiais simplistas, que abordam os temas de maneira rasa e prática, aproximando-se mais de um material para aqueles que já têm afinidade e se interessam por ler um conteúdo relativamente denso sobre o assunto.

Os livros vendidos, hoje, por Dana Gerhardt são todos digitais, no formato pdf, e têm uma diagramação muito simples e pouco atrativa, que não parece ter sido pensada para um formato digital; pois a leitura de um livro digital inteiro dessa maneira logo se tornaria cansativa, e mesmo que fosse impresso, não ofereceria nenhum diferencial ou estímulo visual. O formato no qual os textos se apresentam é contraditório com o pensamento da própria autora, que defende que é melhor aprender astrologia de uma maneira visual e imaginativa. Foi possível notar que a intenção desse projeto estava alinhado ao que a autora busca fazer com suas publicações, mas essas se limitam à plataforma digital, e ainda têm uso limitado dessa plataforma, como é possível perceber na Figura 3 a seguir, uma captura de tela de um dos seus *ebooks*.

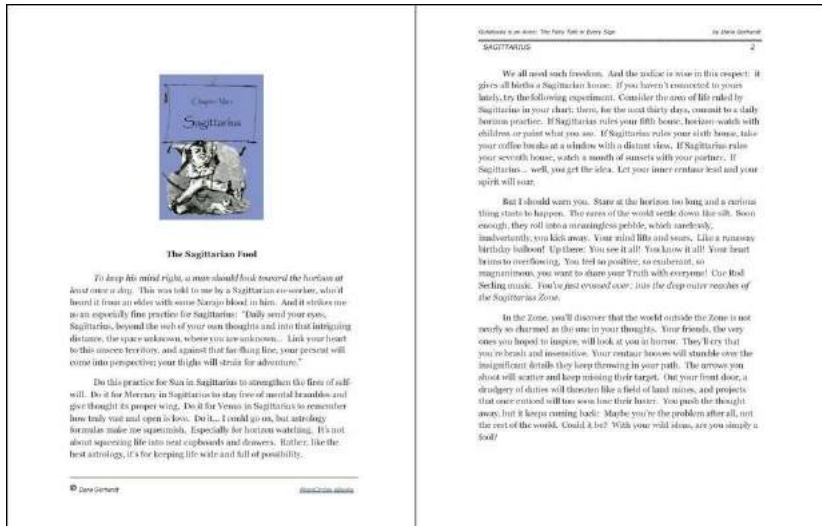


Figura 3: Captura do ebook “Goldilocks was na Aries”, de Dana Gerhardt
Fonte: mooncircles.com

Identificou-se como necessidade do projeto a elaboração de uma publicação dinâmica, adaptada aos limites e potenciais da sua plataforma, com um projeto gráfico que fosse agradável e incentivasse a leitura, considerando o volume, a complexidade e a abordagem não-convencional dos textos selecionados, e de maneira que incentivasse o leitor a interpretá-los de forma visual e imaginativa.

O objetivo e as necessidades do projeto, agora claramente definidos, permitiram assertividade à fase de coleta de informação.

2.2 Coleta de informação

Nesse momento buscou-se investigar, de forma mais aprofundada, aspectos relativos ao cliente, ao produto, ao público e aos similares. Essas informações trouxeram o projeto para um contexto mais nítido e refinado.

2.2.1 Cliente e Produto

A fase de coleta de informação se iniciou pelo estudo do cliente e do produto, nela se buscou definir conceitos e aspectos que integrem a imagem coordenada da autora e de seus textos. Uma das dificuldades

encontradas para concretizar essa fase foi a falta de contato com a autora, o que impossibilitou a realização de um *briefing*, ou mesmo de uma entrevista na qual poderiam ser investigados aspectos sobre a cliente ou o produto; esse impasse foi solucionado utilizando a ferramenta de pesquisa visual, descrita por Ellen Lupton (2013) em seu livro *Graphic Design Thinking*. A pesquisa visual consiste em buscar, em textos e imagens, um padrão, ou um “acúmulo” de uma certa área.

Para delinear imagem da cliente, foram analisados o site da autora - o *Mooncircles* (mooncircles.com) -, o conteúdo e os artigos do site, as palavras com que ela descreve suas leituras e *workshops*, a maneira com que os seus clientes e leitores a descrevem e também as palavras com que outros autores, outros sites e outras revistas de astrologia a descrevem. Buscou-se também conhecer os temas explorados pela autora e analisar as imagens que ilustram o site, interpretando-as subjetivamente e buscando pontos convergentes que fossem reforçados pelos depoimentos de clientes dela e pela maneira com que a autora é mencionada, tanto por outros astrólogos e autores, quanto nos sites e revistas em que aparece.

A) Cliente

O site de Dana, *Mooncircles* (mooncircles.com), é pontuado com várias informações técnicas, uma área do menu informa quando vai ser o próximo aspecto importante da lua, quais os trânsitos da lua pro dia, e em quais fases e signos estão a lua e vênus atualmente. Em sites e revistas, a autora é citada muitas vezes por seu conhecimento e seu longo tempo de atuação, essa relação é reforçada pelo depoimentos de clientes publicados no site de Dana; um deles diz

Sua habilidade como uma conselheira espiritual intuitiva, pé-no-chão e extremamente perspicaz é muito importante para aqueles de nós que fomos sortudos o suficiente de termos sido guiados até você. Você ajudou meu marido e eu tremendamente e sei que contaremos com sua sabedoria muitas vezes. (MOONCIRCLES.COM)

Foi possível identificar no depoimento a imagem de alguém que conhece extensivamente o assunto, entende de detalhes técnicos e que é respeitada em seu campo de conhecimento.



Figura 4: Topo do site *Mooncircles*
Fonte: mooncircles.com

Ao se descrever, a autora também usa de misticismo; um exemplo disso pode ser encontrado no texto introdutório de uma seção de leituras de mapas astrais, em que Dana promete trazer para os clientes perspectiva, visão e mágica. A autora diz estar conectada com os planetas, e com a força divina que estes representam, essa conexão é reforçada pelas menções constantes à Lua, à Vênus e a Deusas. A autora também oferece workshops e mapas astrais direcionados à lua e à vênus.



Figura 5: Detalhes do site *Mooncircles*
Fonte: mooncircles.com

Tanto Vênus quanto a Lua são associadas com Deusas mitológicas, ou seja, figuras femininas, místicas e poderosas; e em textos do site, alguns termos usados como “intimidade com a lua” e “liberte sua vênus”, reforçam a conexão com essas figuras arquetípicas.

Além dos mitos, há também uma constante referência aos contos de fadas por Dana. Em muitos momentos a autora se refere à vida como uma história, um conto. Seu site é pontuado por frases de efeito como “Você é o herói. É a sua jornada.”, “Às vezes o problema é estar muito familiarizado com a própria história” e “os deuses estão profundamente

envolvidos com suas fortunas e seus dramas.”, frases como essas evocam a linguagem fantástica de autores de contos de fadas.

Foi possível perceber que a imagem da Dana gira em torno dessa persona sábia, portadora de grandes conhecimentos e informações técnicas e detalhadas. Ela não só sabe muito como também tem uma forte conexão com os temas espirituais e místicos dos quais ela trata, e o conhecimento dela vem dessa fonte mística, como uma sacerdotisa que é capaz de conversar com deusas e arquétipos. A relação com os contos de fadas reforçam isso, e faz parecer que a vida é uma brincadeira muito simples para a autora. Dana é capaz de olhar para as situações como se estivesse acima delas, como uma autora que consegue ver cada personagem em sua jornada. Ela é sábia, talentosa, mística, poética, caridosa e simples.

B) Produto

Foi interessante notar que, embora à primeira vista chamem a atenção pelo tamanho e estrutura, os textos de Dana são mencionados e lembrados por seus leitores por serem divertidos e envolventes. Um dos leitores de Dana diz que os textos da autora são “refrescantes, iluminadores e sensíveis.”, e pontua “Muitas vezes você me fez sentir bem comigo mesmo!”. Foi possível intuir que grande parte disso se deve ao tom de voz dos textos, mais parecido com aquele de uma crônica ou conto literário do que de um artigo. O relato de outro leitor diz que o estilo da escrita de Dana é “tão lírico - você traz muita informação e conhecimento em um relatório, mas sempre de uma maneira que torna fácil pro leitor assimilar.”, as palavras “empatia” e “poesia” também são usadas para descrever a escrita de Dana. Ainda assim a profundidade do conteúdo e o conhecimento inserido nos textos são reconhecidos, um leitor relata:

Eu me considero um astrólogo amador razoavelmente competente, então os conceitos dos quais você trata não são novos pra mim, mas cada página continha *insights* e conselhos que expandiram minha realidade. Certamente essa é uma das ferramentas para o crescimento pessoal mais útil, prática e inspiradora que eu já recebi.
(MOONCIRCLES.COM)

O fato de os textos trazerem referências reais é mencionado como diferencial por um leitor que diz “suas reflexões sobre suas experiências comparados com o que geralmente é escrito sobre a 4ª casa são os melhores que eu já li”. Essa multiplicidade de referências com que Dana constrói a linha de pensamento dos textos resulta em um de seus maiores diferenciais: a capacidade de trazer os arquétipos à vida, dando-lhes personalidade e materialidade. O autor Jeff Jawer diz que “a escrita de Dana traz os planetas à vida como nenhum outro escritor do campo faz”, e pontua “ela é a Meryl Streep dos escritores astrológicos: esperta, sensível e perspicaz”.

Com tudo isso, os textos de Dana Gerhardt incentivam os leitores a compreender os arquétipos como uma realidade presente diariamente. A partir daí o leitor pode acessar e compreender aspectos pessoais, e experienciar novas perspectivas sobre a própria vida. Por conta dessa dinâmica, os leitores se emocionam e criam conexão emocional com os textos, como evidenciado no seguinte relato:

Eu geralmente pulo direto para seus artigos na *The Mountain Astrologer*. O artigo sobre a Lua literalmente trouxe lágrimas aos meus olhos. Haviam muitas ideias que eu precisava escutar nesse momento. Obrigada por dar a uma mãe de primeira viagem uma razão para não ser tão dura consigo mesmo. (MOONCIRCLES.COM)

Em conclusão, a linguagem dos textos é envolvente e poética, ao mesmo tempo em que as leituras trazem muita informação e conhecimento e expandem o entendimento sobre astrologia. Os textos emocionam e são profundos, pois ela fala a partir de situações e experiências reais e comuns a todos, sendo muito dito que os arquétipos ganham vida nos textos de Dana, o que os torna interessantes e divertidos.

2.2.2 Público

Entre as modalidades de pesquisa para análise do público, escolheu-se realizar um questionário online, por ser o método mais acessível, e, como o questionário foi publicado em grupos de astrologia de abrangência nacional, pela capacidade de cobrir uma gama mais extensa de respondentes no que diz respeito à localização, à área de atuação, à faixa etária, entre outros.

Buscou-se, com as perguntas, conhecer melhor o público, seus interesses e hábitos, com relação à astrologia e a leitura de modo geral. O questionário foi veiculado pela primeira vez no dia 6 de outubro, às 18:59, no *Facebook*, nos dias seguintes, de 7 a 10, ele foi compartilhado em sete grupos de astrologia e enviado pessoalmente para interessados em responder e encerrado no dia 17 de outubro, às 17:17, com 58 respostas. O roteiro completo do questionário se encontra no Anexo A.

O público questionado é majoritariamente feminino (81%), jovem adulto (66% têm entre 18 e 25, e 14% entre 26 e 30) e busca formação acadêmica (52% têm o ensino superior incompleto, seguidos pelo ensino superior completo, 26%, e pós graduação, 14%). É importante citar que 57% por cento dos acessos ao questionário foram feitos via celular e 43% via PCs e *Laptops*. Quanto ao hábito de leitura de textos astrológicos, são mais acostumados a ler textos de tamanho médio, *posts* extensos de *Facebook*, *blogs* e artigos (84%), mas também leem textos longos (21%); apenas 8% dos questionados leem apenas textos curtos. A maior parte busca essas leituras por prazer (79%), seguidos de 69% que leem por conhecimento. A maior parte afirmou nunca ter comprado um livro de astrologia (57%), mas a diferença daqueles que já compraram não é discrepante, somando 43% das respostas. Os gráficos a seguir sintetizam as respostas à essa primeira parte do questionário.

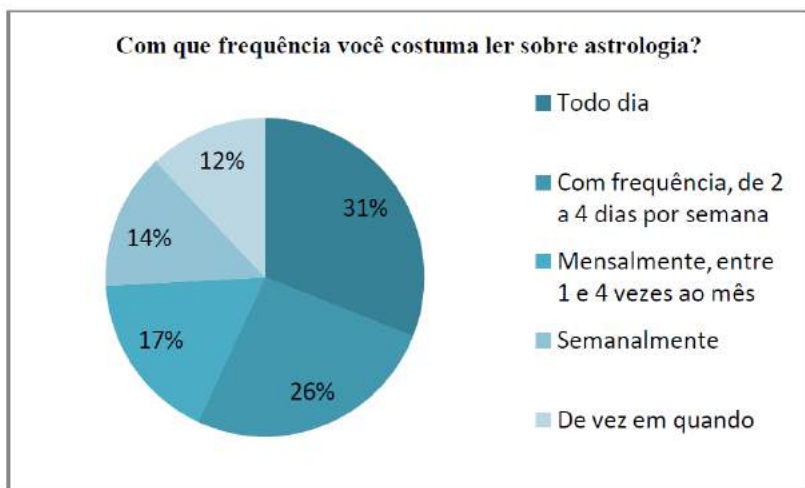


Figura 6: Gráfico sobre a frequência de leitura do público.

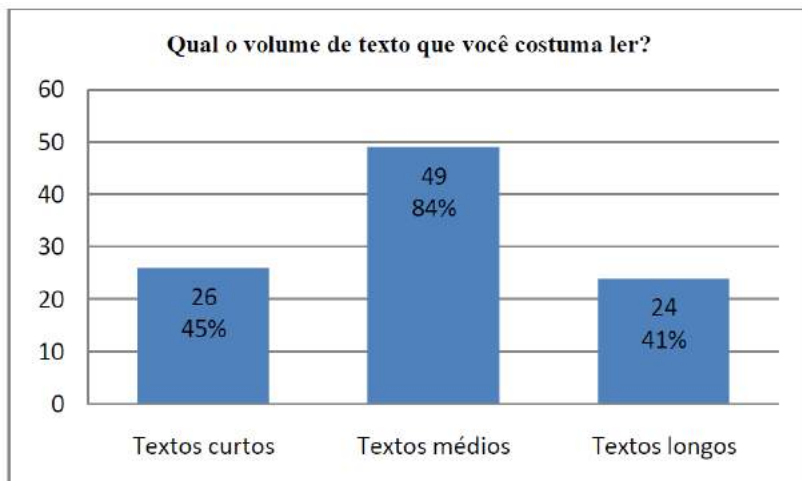


Figura 7: Gráfico sobre o hábito de leitura sobre astrologia do público

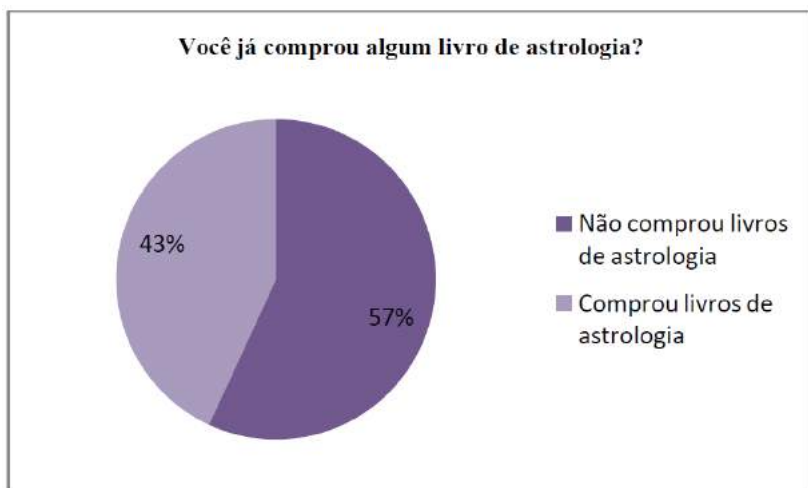


Figura 8: Gráfico sobre o hábito de consumo do público

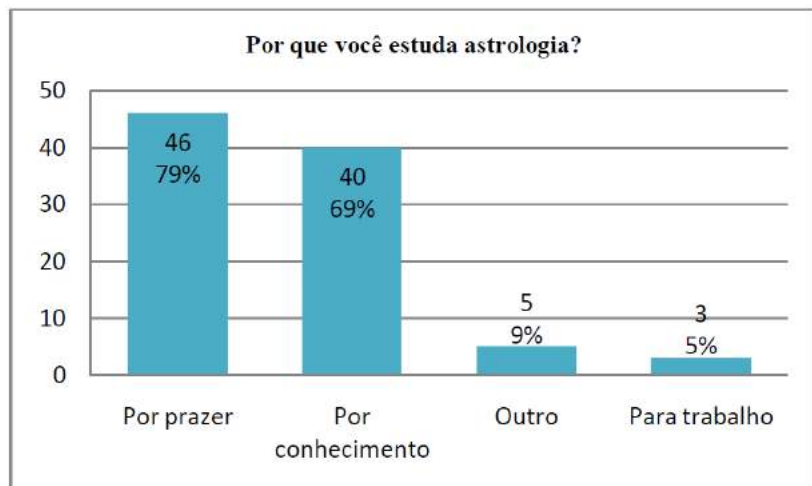


Figura 9: Gráfico sobre o interesse do público

Também foram avaliadas questões relativas aos hábitos de leitura dos participantes, de modo geral, para saber que tipo de suporte editorial é mais familiar para esse público. Os blogs atendem à maioria absoluta dos avaliados (93%) - é possível intuir que isso se deve à facilidade de acesso e ampla variedade de assuntos -, seguido por livros didáticos (62%) e livros técnicos (52%). A parcela que lê revistas também é expressiva (47%) e representa 28% daqueles que compram livros de astrologia e 46% daqueles que leem textos longos. Quanto ao suporte que os participantes costumam comprar, o livro físico lidera com 83%, e as motivações principais para se comprar um livro são o tema (91%), o autor (60%) e recomendações (53%). Questões referentes ao design editorial (capa, conforto e visual diferenciado) foram bem citadas, com respectivamente 50%, 48% e 40%. As ilustrações, apesar de constarem várias respostas (29%) foram as menos citadas.



Figura 10: Gráfico sobre o hábito de leitura geral do público



Figura 11: Gráfico sobre o interesse de compra do público

Em síntese, o público é constituído por jovens adultos, principalmente do sexo feminino, que vêm na astrologia tanto um conhecimento a ser adquirido como um *hobby* a ser experienciado, são leitoras ecléticas e freqüentes, e por serem atuais e conectadas, aliam a prática e o estudo da astrologia ao meio digital.

Neste questionário também se buscou saber quais páginas e sites se destacam na área de astrologia e por quê - dado que pode ser usado futuramente para buscar referência gráfica -, bem como autoras e autores que marcaram os questionados, para direcionar a busca por similares na fase seguinte de análise.

2.2.3 Similares

O estudo de similares foi feito com o auxílio de uma ficha de avaliação, elaborada de modo a garantir que a análise será efetiva e coesa, ou seja, que todos os tópicos de interesse serão cobertos em todos os livros analisados.

Tipografia
Nº de fontes
Análise técnica das fontes (Serifada/Sans Texto/Display)
Hierarquia
Imagens
Categoria (Representativa/Abstrata)
Estilo
Editorial
Capa
Análise dos elementos editoriais (Guia/Folio/Box/Citação)
Análise da organização editorial
(Margens/Spacejamento/Entrelinha/Dinâmica do texto)
Relação texto-imagem
Produção gráfica
Papel
Tamanho
Acabamento
Tem efeitos gráficos?
Conteúdo
Organização do conteúdo
Particularidades

Figura 12: Ficha para análise de similares

Ao todo foram analisados cinco livros, Astrologia, Psicologia e os Quatro Elementos, de Stephen Arroyo, Encontros Astrais, de Mainá Melo, Leonardo Astrólogo, de Pedro Tornaghi, Os astros sempre nos acompanham, de Claudia Lisboa e Astrologia mítica, de Liz Greene. As fichas preenchidas com a análise de cada livro se encontram no Apêndice A.

De modo geral, os livros analisados têm pouca preocupação com o projeto gráfico e uso limitado dos recursos editoriais que o livro impresso oferece; exceto aqueles mais atuais, que propõem conteúdos diferenciados e que introduzem novos autores no mercado; a abordagem do conteúdo também é simples e objetiva, não requerendo uma leitura contínua. São, em síntese, livros que oferecem pouco valor e atrativos rasos; com exceção ao livro Leonardo Astrólogo. A seguir são estão algumas imagens mostrando a capa e algumas páginas desses livros.

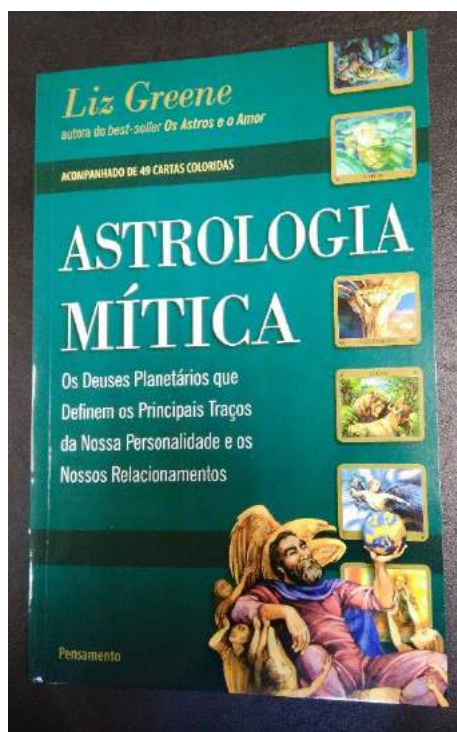


Figura 13: Capa do livro Astrologia Mítica, de Liz Greene.



Figura 14: Página do livro *Astrologia Mítica*, de Liz Greene.



Figura 15: Capa do livro *Os Astros sempre nos acompanham*, de Claudia Lisboa.

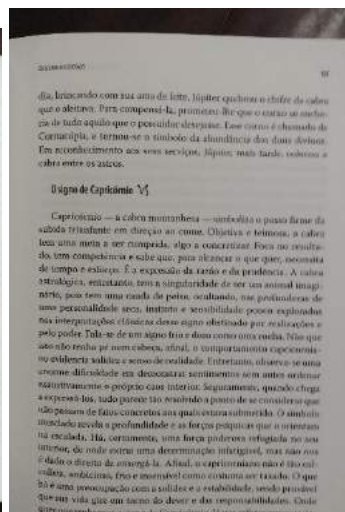


Figura 16: Páginas do livro *Os Astros sempre nos acompanham*, de Claudia Lisboa.

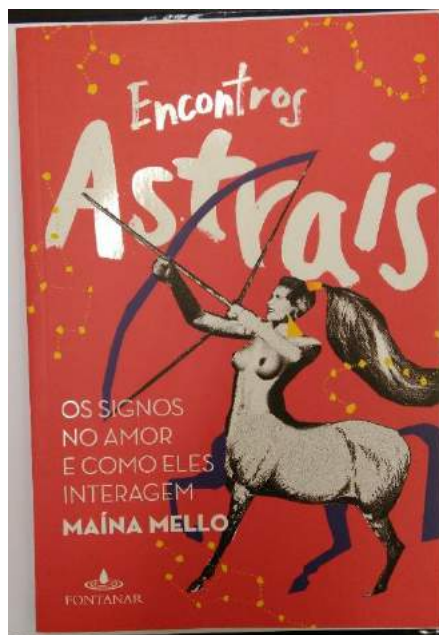


Figura 17: Capa do livro Encontros Astrais, de Mainá Mello

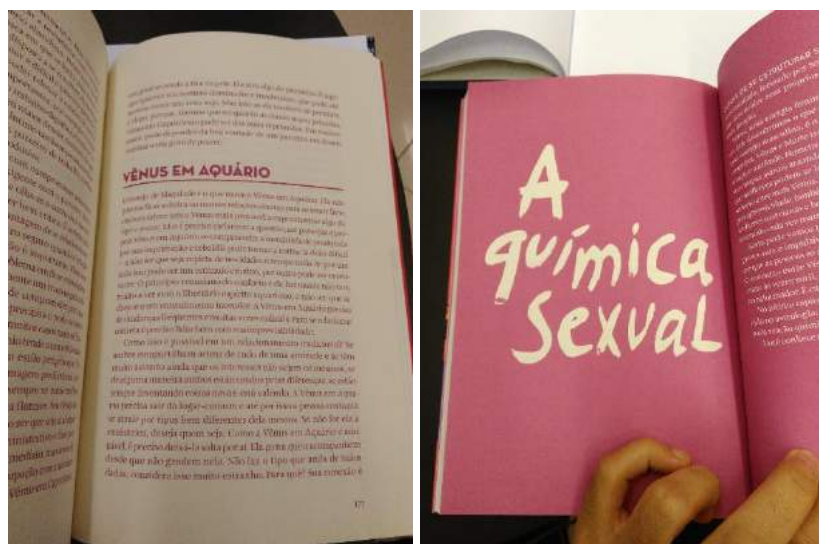


Figura 18: Páginas do livro Encontros Astrais, de Mainá Mello

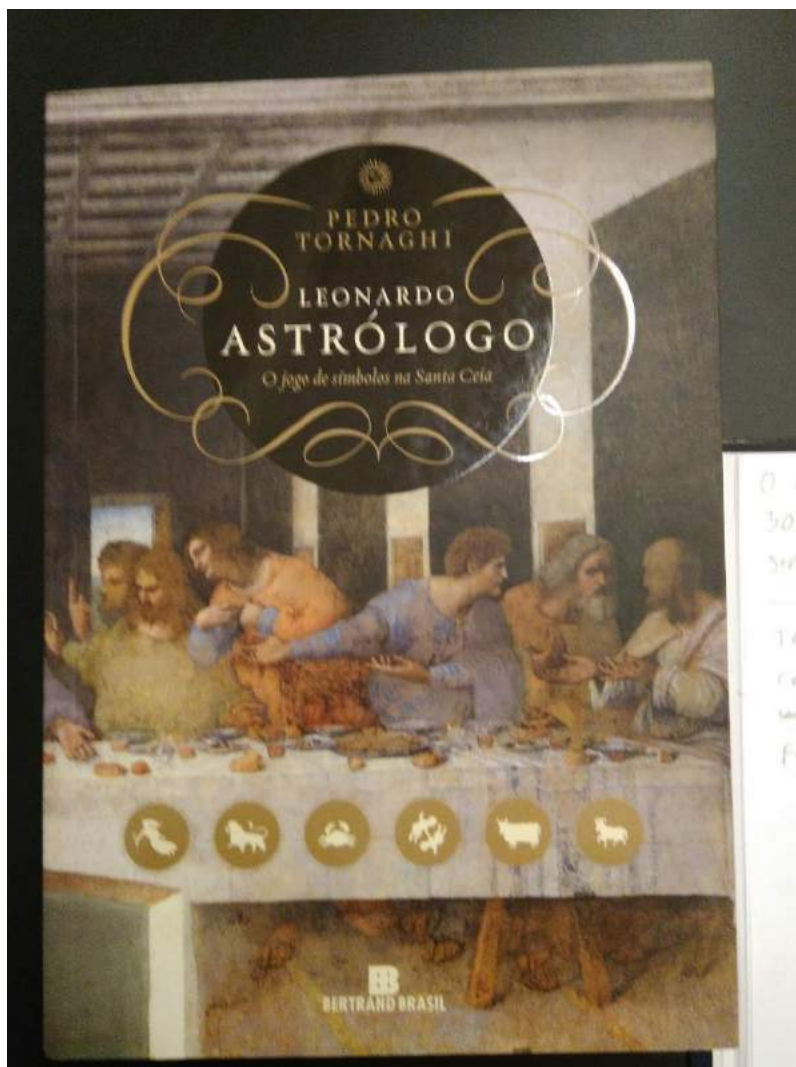


Figura 19: Capa do livro Leonardo Astrólogo, de Pedro Tornaghi

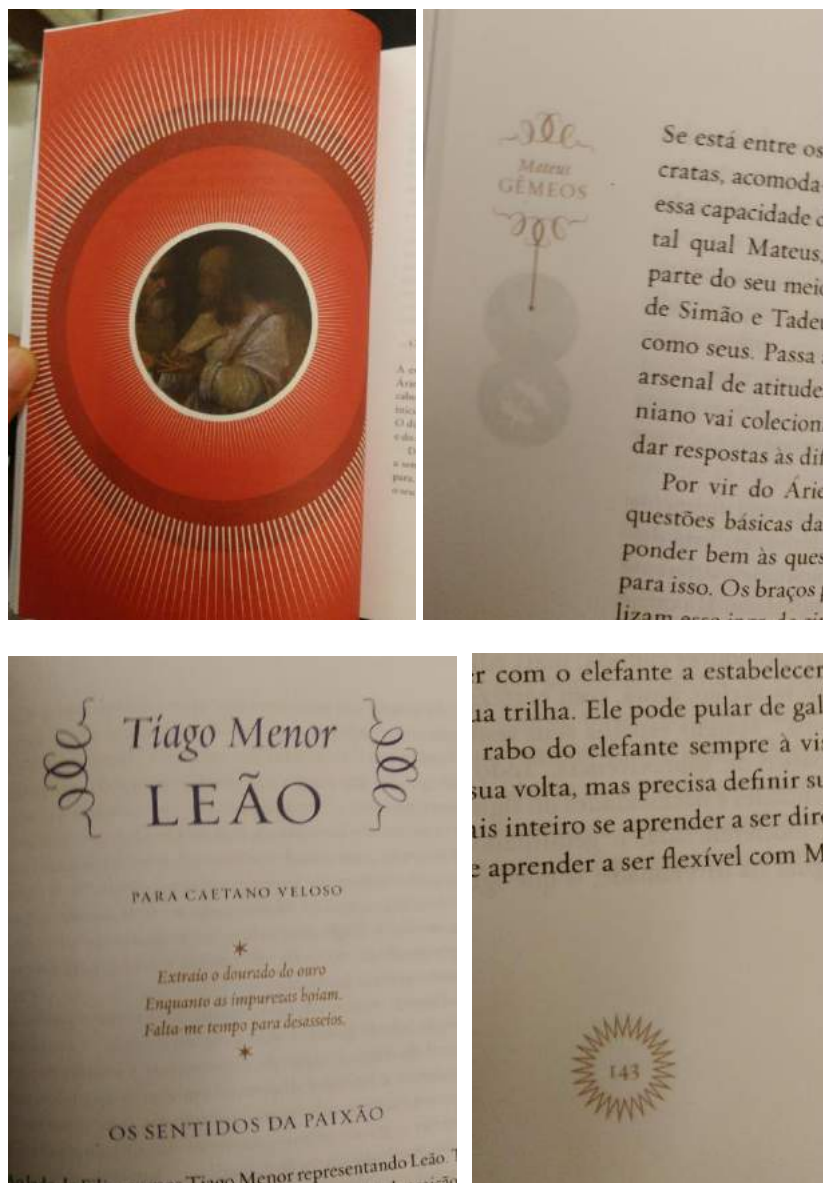


Figura 20: Detalhes do livro Leonardo Astrólogo, de Pedro Tornaghi

Desta análise, algumas similaridades se destacaram: o uso de fontes serifadas para o texto, a ausência de ilustrações, a fragmentação dos textos em seções menores, o tamanho e o acabamento em lombada quadrada. Também se percebeu um padrão na falta de exploração de elementos e efeitos gráficos-editoriais.

O uso de fontes serifadas em publicações impressas é comum e histórico, por questões de legibilidade e leitura; e foi interessante notar como essa escolha permaneceu mesmo no livro *Encontros Astrais*, obra de tom mais contemporâneo e que já quebrou com a tradição editorial ao ser impresso todo em tinta roxa. Foi possível relacionar o uso de fontes serifadas com a busca por manter o tradicionalismo e o tom profissional na publicação, motivo que também justificaria a ausência de ilustrações e a escassez de elementos gráficos, haja vista que esses livros também são comprados por aqueles que buscam uma relação profissional com a astrologia. Ao mesmo tempo, isso pode se dar por um descaso das editoras, que sabem que o mercado é pouco renovado e explorado; quando se compara o livro de Liz Greene, uma autora renomada internacionalmente, com o de Mainá Mello, uma autora nacional estreante, constata-se que o livro de Mainá é colorido e chamativo, enquanto o de Liz é inconsistente e desinteressante. Foi interessante analisar como esse fato pode ser interpretado por meio das respostas dadas ao questionário: o design editorial pode motivar a compra de um livro, e o cenário atual, que não se preocupa com esse aspecto, reflete no fato de mais da metade dos leitores não comprarem livros de astrologia.

A fragmentação do texto ajuda a dar pausas na leitura, facilitando a compreensão do conteúdo pelos leitores. No livro proposto pelo projeto, o conteúdo estava próximo daquele encontrado no livro *Leonardo Astrólogo*, com um texto corrido para cada signo. Assim como nesse último livro citado, haveria doze textos, e as divisões do texto deveriam servir para dar respiros no texto, impedindo que o conteúdo se apresentasse excessivamente denso.

Ao fim da fase de coleta de informação, tinha-se informações detalhadas de todos os aspectos que envolvem o projeto; mas foi na fase seguinte, chamada segunda definição do problema, que essas informações foram interpretadas.

2.3 Segunda definição do problema

A partir de uma análise dos dados coletados, orientada pelo objetivo do projeto, tornou-se possível traçar relações construtivas entre a imagem da autora, o produto, as preferências do público e os similares, identificando elementos-chave que formarão a base do processo de design.

Notou-se pela pesquisa de similares, e no estudo das preferências do público, a necessidade de que a publicação estivesse claramente organizada, fosse coesa e carregasse uma forte carga de conhecimento. Isso reforçaria tanto a imagem da autora, como pessoa sábia, quanto a compreensão, pelo público, de que seus textos são informativos e trazem aprendizado consistente sobre astrologia, ao mesmo tempo que atende à busca daqueles que leem astrologia pelo conhecimento. Além do mais, a organização valorizaria o conteúdo e o grande volume de texto de cada capítulo.

Garantida a organização da publicação, seria preciso garantir também a expressividade no projeto gráfico-editorial, para que o objetivo da publicação se concretizasse, e o leitor identificasse o arquétipo materializado visualmente em cada capítulo. Isso potencializaria o efeito dos textos, da expressão dos arquétipos, e, conseqüentemente, a imagem de Dana como uma autora mística e poética. À essa expressividade seria somado um cuidado com o design editorial, o que resultaria em um claro diferencial dos similares, que têm pouca ou nenhuma preocupação com esse cuidado, e um atrativo ao público, que é motivado por aspectos relativos a um bom design editorial, principalmente o conforto.

Dessa forma, a publicação permitiria uma experiência de leitura prazerosa e estimulante, a partir de um projeto que evidenciaria que os textos são interessantes e divertidos, e reforçaria a imagem poética de Dana Gerhardt; isso também foi importante porque a maior parte do público lê sobre astrologia por prazer. Outra necessidade constatada foi a de que o livro tivesse um tamanho transportável, pois requereria uma leitura contínua.

Tendo esses pontos em mente, foi definido que o livro impresso seria o melhor canal para a execução do projeto, pois é uma mídia mais valorizada e tradicional, e permitiria uma experiência de leitura mais prazerosa e pessoal, possibilitando uma conexão emocional com o produto.

Uma vez definido claramente como o produto deverá se apresentar cognitivamente e esteticamente, iniciou-se a fase chamada de terceira

definição do problema, onde foi estudada a materialização desses critérios na mídia escolhida.

2.4 Terceira definição do problema

Na terceira definição do problema foram especificados os recursos gráficos e editoriais que foram usados para atingir os critérios de projeto definidos em todas as fases anteriores. O objetivo dessa fase foi gerar uma visualização clara e objetiva da totalidade do problema, sintetizando a informação coletada para que as alternativas precisas pudessem ser criadas, e para tal foram criados três painéis visuais, tais como descreve Mike Baxter em seu livro *Projeto de Produto: guia prático para o design de novos produtos*. (2000)

Antes da criação dos painéis, porém, foi criado um mapa mental, com a intenção de concentrar todos os conceitos e temas que envolvem o projeto em questão.



Figura 21: Mapa mental

O mapa mental teve como propósito a visualização de aspectos relativos ao público e ao livro, mostrando como esses aspectos se relacionam entre si. Essa organização colaborou com a criação dos painéis pois mostra áreas de interesse e hábitos do público, e como esses tópicos se conectam a temas da publicação.

A criação dos painéis visuais se iniciou pelo painel de estilo de vida, que iria “traçar uma imagem do estilo de vida dos futuros consumidores do produto. Essas imagens devem refletir os valores pessoais e sociais, além de representar o tipo de vida desses consumidores” (BAXTER, 2000).

Figura 22: Painel de estilo de vida

O público-alvo é constituído por estudiosos, que leem livros, blogs e revistas, e se interessam por ciências humanas onde os arquétipos são estudados, como história, antropologia e psicologia; se interessam por terapias, pois buscam o autoconhecimento, e são adeptos de métodos alternativos de cura. São místicos, acreditam em energias criadoras e inteligências maiores que regem o universo e buscam entrar em conexão com essas energias e seus ciclos cósmicos. Curiosos e perspicazes, buscam saciar o interesse pelo desconhecido lendo e compartilhando conhecimento e aplicando os símbolos e ensinamentos místicos na sua rotina

A partir do painel de estilo de vida, foi identificada a expressão do produto. “Essa expressão deve ser uma síntese do estilo de vida dos consumidores. Ela representa a emoção que o produto transmite, ao primeiro olhar.” (BAXTER, 2000)

Figura 23: Painel de expressão do produto

O livro deveria transmitir riqueza de conteúdo, detalhes e informações, expressando expansão de conhecimento, e que é uma obra a ser levada a sério. O livro seria místico, dinâmico e energético, permitindo que os leitores se aprofundem nos textos, descobrindo novos aspectos com o tempo. O livro seria divertido, literário e artístico, expressando a vida cósmica que os arquétipos carregam.

Por fim, foi criado o painel do tema visual, a partir de imagens de outros produtos e projetos de design gráfico que estejam de acordo com a expressão pretendida para o novo produto, sintetizada no painel anterior. Com o uso desse último painel foi possível definir o estilo das fontes, formas, imagens e da organização editorial que serão usadas no livro.

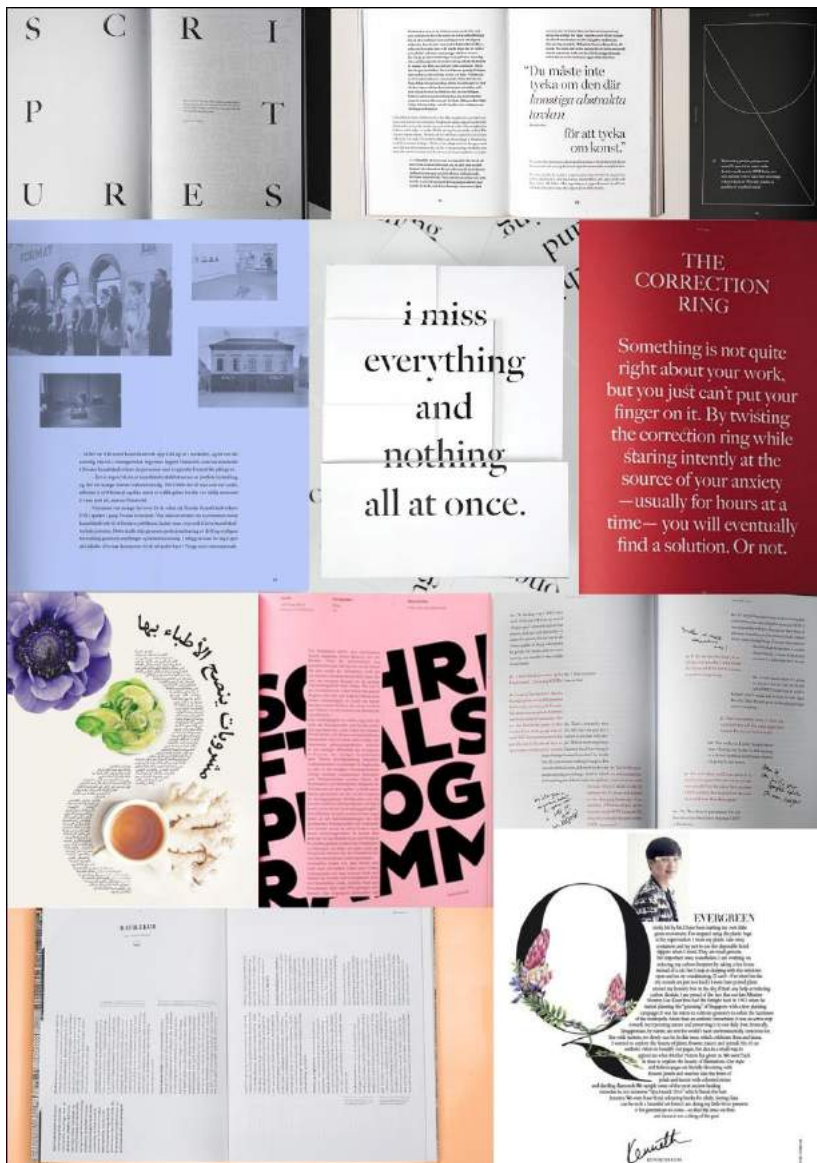


Figura 24: Painei de tema vizual

O livro seria organizado, com elementos que remontam ao tradicionalismo da linguagem gráfica editorial, como a fonte serifada para o texto, o papel pólen de gramatura 90, o tamanho padrão e o acabamento em lombada quadrada. A organização não iria interferir na expressividade do material, cujos diagramas seriam fluidos, quebrados, redimensionados e rotacionados de acordo com o conceito de cada capítulo. A organização de conteúdo também estaria suscetível à proposta de cada capítulo, e efeitos, texturas e interações com o diagrama e a tipografia seriam propostas, reforçando a expressão do arquétipo através dos aspectos estéticos. O uso de imagens seria tópico, com poucas imagens selecionadas que reforçassem os arquétipos, e não haveriam ilustrações no corpo de texto.

Com a criação destes painéis e a definição destas diretrizes, concluiu-se a fase da terceira definição do problema, e iniciou-se o desenvolvimento da proposta, última etapa do projeto.

2.5 Desenvolvimento da Proposta

Ao fim da terceira definição do problema, o projeto está bem delineado e é seguro começar a desenvolver a proposta. Frascara propõe que nesse período são definidos os detalhes de imagem, tipografia, layout e cor, determinando as formas e os conteúdos definitivos (FRASCARA, 2004). Nesse caso, isso significa a definição da hierarquia de conteúdo, como os textos serão distribuídos; a criação do layout das páginas, o grid e os diagramas de margens e colunas; a definição das fontes que serão usadas no livro, e de como serão usadas, em que ordem, tamanhos e pesos; a seleção das imagens que ilustrarão os textos, e a composição com que essas imagens se apresentarão; bem como as cores que serão usadas no livro, e de que maneira serão usadas. Questões relativas à produção gráfica, como tamanho do livro, materiais e acabamentos, apesar de definidos em etapas prévias, podem sofrer alterações, caso essa necessidade se manifeste.

A metodologia proposta por Frascara não foi desenvolvida especificamente para a criação em design editorial e por isso, a etapa de criação desse projeto foi feita usando uma série de ferramentas adequadas ao contexto, criadas por outros autores e adaptadas à realidade do projeto, o que resultou no desenvolvimento de um método criativo único, específico para esse projeto; Nesse relatório será descrito o processo de criação de dois capítulos do livro, referente aos signos de Peixes e de

Capricórnio; todos os outros capítulos foram criados replicando o mesmo método.

2.5.1 Estrutura da publicação

O início do processo de desenvolvimento do livro se deu com a criação do Espelho de publicação. O espelho de publicação, ou espelho editorial, é descrito por Yolanda Zapatterra como “a ferramenta individual mais importante na produção de qualquer publicação” (2014), e consiste na simulação da distribuição do conteúdo de um projeto editorial, através de um diagrama similar a um storyboard; nele, o texto, com seus títulos, seções, e notas são estruturados. Usando o tamanho de página pré-definido e um valor especulado para as margens e a fonte, o conteúdo é distribuído em spreads e o espelho o livro começa a tomar forma. O objetivo principal disso é determinar o número de páginas do material, e definir então como se dará o fluxo desse conteúdo, mapeando o conteúdo da edição. Essa ferramenta cria a estrutura básica do projeto, tornando possível visualizar o número médio de páginas que terá cada capítulo e o número aproximado de páginas do livro finalizado, determinar a sequência do conteúdo da edição e se o tamanho de página, margens e fontes é adequado.

Através do espelho, pode-se perceber que o tamanho selecionado anteriormente para o livro (20,5 x 14 cm, escolhido durante a terceira definição do problema) seria inadequado ao projeto, pois resultaria em capítulos muito extensos e em um espaço restrito para as margens e manchas de texto, o que resultaria em um aumento no custo de produção e menos liberdade para desenvolver as experimentações estéticas de cada capítulo. Dessa maneira, um novo formato foi escolhido, de 26,7 centímetros de altura por 18,5 centímetros de largura; maior em todas as dimensões, mas ainda assim transportável e ergonômico, de proporção tradicional.

O livro seria composto de doze capítulos, cada capítulo constitui um artigo independente - não existe ordem definida para a leitura -, mas ao mesmo tempo, todos os capítulos estão associados e deveriam ser diagramados de forma a constituir uma unidade, assim como os doze signos diferentes constituem uma unidade, o horóscopo, ou cada um dos doze trabalhos de Hércules. Utilizando o espelho de publicação tornou-se possível propor alternativas para a estrutura dos capítulos e do livro.

Várias alternativas foram geradas, dando diferentes ênfases para o conteúdo. Cada organização gera um efeito, e esses diferentes efeitos foram avaliados e comparados para escolher o ideal. Foi preciso levar em

consideração as definições realizadas anteriormente, que exigem que o livro ofereça boa leitura e ao mesmo tempo, grande expressividade a cada capítulo.

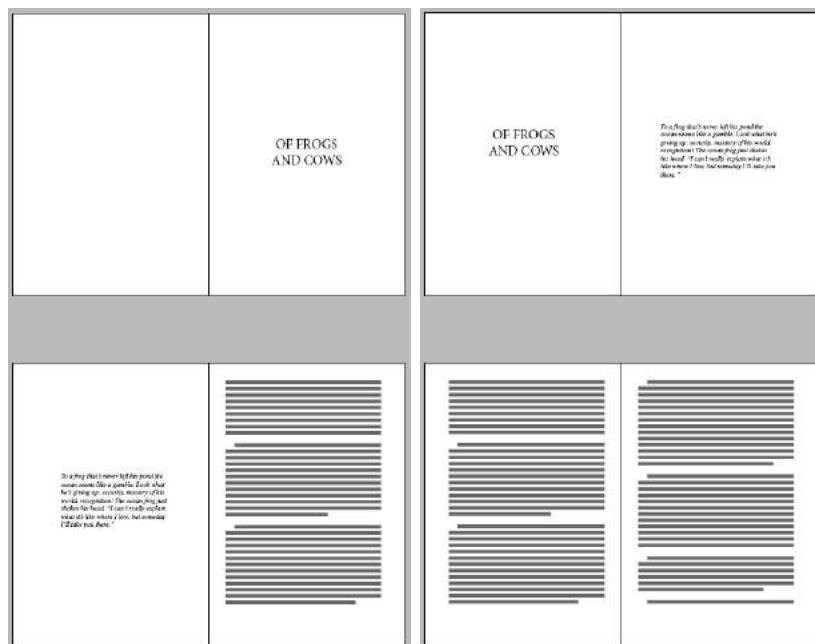


Figura 25: Alternativas de estrutura para os capítulos.

Fonte: O autor

A solução encontrada foi de abrir cada capítulo como se este fosse um tomo dentro do livro. O capítulo se iniciaria sempre à direita com uma folha de abertura apresentando o signo; o spread seguinte teria o título do artigo e um primeiro trecho em destaque na primeira página, na página seguinte, haveria uma mancha de texto de dimensões ligeiramente menores do que a padrão. No spread inicial, a tipografia do título do artigo estaria modificada, através de algum efeito, moldura ou intervenção gráfica, que reforçasse os conceitos do signo em questão. Essa organização permite a expressão e a identificação clara dos conceitos de cada signo, ao mesmo tempo que garante uma boa experiência de leitura, localizando o leitor a cada início de capítulo, e gerando uma sensação de familiaridade e constância na diagramação.

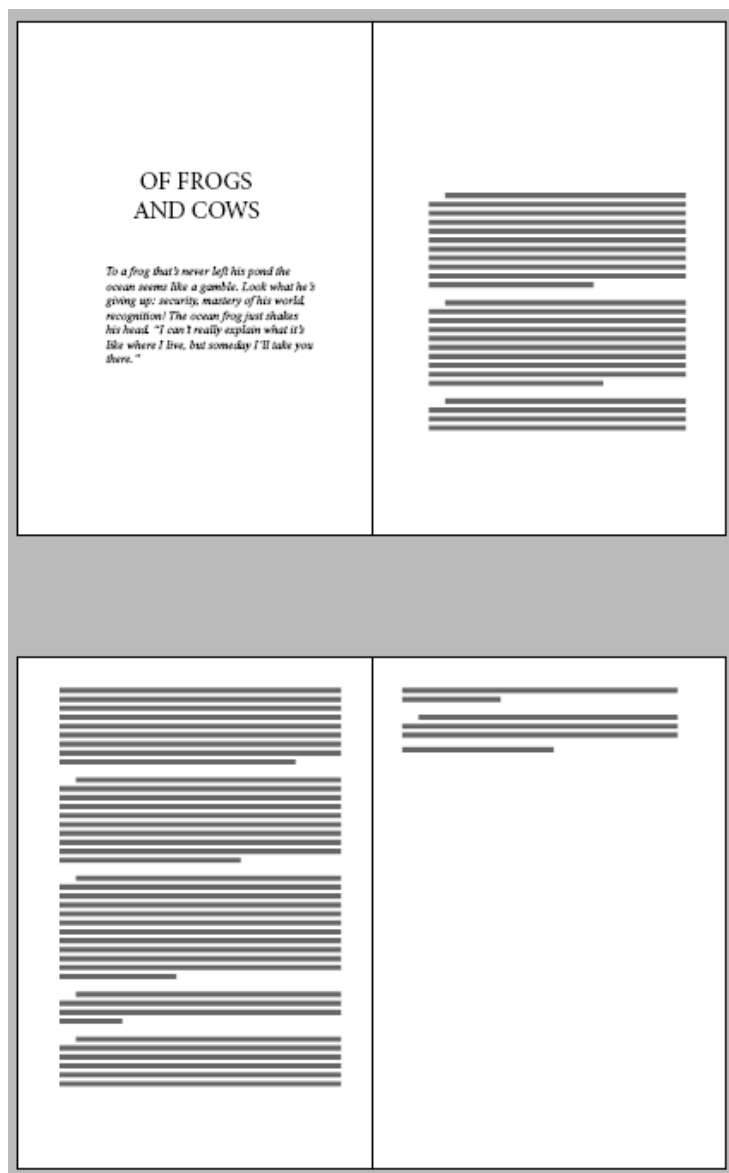


Figura 26: Solução selecionada para a estrutura dos capítulos.

Fonte: O autor

[illegible]

Figura 27: Espelho de publicação atualizado

Baseando-se nesse espelho atualizado, foram consideradas as edições a serem feitas no projeto editorial, que incluiriam quebras de diagrama, alteração de tamanhos e formas, e estimou-se que cada capítulo poderia estender-se a um máximo de 16 páginas.

Sabendo disso, foi possível projetar aspectos do livro para a impressão. Considerando as determinações das etapas anteriores da metodologia, que previram que o livro deveria ter acabamento em lombada quadrada, e valorizar a leitura do conteúdo, definiu-se que a impressão e o acabamento do livro seria realizada em livretos, pois esse esquema favorece a abertura e a leitura do livro, bem como a encadernação. Foi possível também projetar quantos desses livretos seriam coloridos, quantas páginas haveriam por livreto, etc.. Foi decidido que o livro seria impresso com cadernos de 4 páginas (2 folhas), pois assim seria possível criar tanto capítulos de 12 quanto de 16 páginas, e permitiria que as quatro páginas iniciais, que conteriam imagens, fossem coloridas, e as páginas de texto, em preto e branco - o que traria economia para os custos de impressão.

2.5.2 Seleção Tipográfica

O próximo passo foi a definição de quais e quantas fontes seriam utilizadas para o projeto. A escolha da fonte mais adequada para o projeto editorial é uma tarefa complexa, pela complexidade dos fatores que a envolvem, e pela importância que esta decisão tem no projeto. A fonte escolhida irá não só influenciar na legibilidade do conteúdo, mas também conferir personalidade e expressão ao conteúdo. (ZAPATERRA, 2014) A escolha da fonte também influencia nos efeitos textuais que serão usados no projeto, bem como nas medidas do grid e do diagrama. Bringhurst defende que se a fonte não for adequada ao conteúdo do projeto, “aquilo que as palavras dizem linguisticamente e aquilo que as letras inferem visualmente ficam dissonantes, desonestos e desafinados”. (2015)

Para o projeto em questão, já haviam sido previstas, na etapa de terceira definição do problema, constantes alterações no diagrama, posicionamento, tamanhos e cores do livro. Desse modo, foi possível perceber logo de início que o mais apropriado seria usar uma única família para o livro, pois isso garante coesão e unidade ao projeto, aspecto importante a ser prezado, considerando a grande diferenciação que haveria entre cada capítulo. Entretanto, seria importante que esta família expressasse tanto o aspecto teórico e tradicional do livro, quanto o aspecto místico e expressivo dos textos.

Dessa maneira, seria importante que a família fosse serifada, como definido durante as etapas anteriores, e que tivesse boa leitura em pequenos tamanhos, mas que fosse expressiva em tamanhos grandes e pesos maiores para ser usada em destaques, e que tivesse uma forma consistente, o que a possibilitaria sofrer interferências gráficas quando usada em títulos e entretítulos.

Tendo sido decidido que seria usada apenas uma família tipográfica, chega a hora de escolhê-la; esse processo foi realizado usando a ferramenta Modelo de apoio à seleção tipográfica. (MEURER, 2017) O modelo de apoio consiste em um processo de cinco etapas, culminando na aplicação de uma Matriz de seleção, que serve para estruturar e direcionar a escolha de uma fonte para os projetos, fragmentando e hierarquizando os fatores decisivos para a escolha.



Figura 28: Estrutura, em infográfico, do Modelo de apoio à seleção tipográfica.
Fonte: MEÜRER, 2017.

A) Contexto do problema

O modelo de seleção tipográfica se inicia com a compreensão do contexto do problema, que nesse caso consistiu basicamente na retomada de aspectos estudados nas etapas anteriores, como o conteúdo do livro e o público.

O conteúdo tem como objetivo informar, mas também tem a função de entreter e envolver o leitor; seu tom é informativo e leve; seu idioma é o Inglês, e sua organização inclui o uso de títulos, entretítulos, legendas, guias e fólios. Os aspectos culturais a serem observados quanto ao conteúdo são: a associação do conteúdo com conteúdos históricos e mitológicos, a irreverência da autora e sua relação com os arquétipos, e o tom de voz literário e místico dos textos.

O livro será impresso em papel pólen, e é projetado para um público jovem, acostumado a ler, que lê conteúdos curtos e médios com relativa frequência, e que busca na leitura tanto uma fonte de informação quanto um hobby prazeroso.

B) Critérios de seleção

Depois, cabe o estudo dos critérios de seleção das fontes para identificar quais são pertinentes para o projeto e em que grau. Meürer ressalta que “é fundamental comparar os critérios sugeridos com as necessidades do projeto a fim de identificar quais são pertinentes” (2017).

Legibilidade e Expressão são dois aspectos essenciais para o projeto, mas é importante lembrar que a expressão fica a mercê da legibilidade, como ressaltado durante a segunda definição do problema; se a fonte não é legível, não importa o quão expressiva seja, ela não é apropriada para o projeto. O aspecto histórico-cultural também é muito importante, para garantir a identificação da fonte com os aspectos mais sutis do conteúdo, como a linguagem literária usada pela autora, o aspecto histórico da astrologia e dos mitos de Hércules, e o próprio fato da autora Dana Gerhardt ser uma mulher e tratar muito do universo feminino. Não seriam necessários muitas variações de fonte, somente que houvesse a opção de tipos romanos e itálicos, em regular e negrito. Questões como suporte, licenciamento e investimento não seriam decisivas, desde que não inviabilizassem o projeto, por se tratar de um trabalho estudantil.

C) Hierarquia

Esta etapa consiste na hierarquização dos critérios, distribuindo pesos para cada. Os pesos são distribuídos de 1 a 5, sendo 5 muito

pertinente e 1 pouco pertinente. Alguns critérios podem ser eliminatórios, ou seja, quaisquer fontes que não correspondem a esse critério não são consideradas alternativas válidas. O seguinte conjunto de pesos foi dado para os critérios: Legibilidade, peso eliminatório. Variações, peso 3. Aspecto histórico-cultural, peso 4. Expressão, peso 5. Qualidade, peso eliminatório. Suporte, peso 2. Licenciamento, peso 1. Investimento, peso 3.

D) Busca

Inicia-se então o processo de busca de fontes, observando o contexto identificado até então. As fontes selecionadas durante essa etapa foram: Linotype Trajanus, Palatino, Baskerville, Mrs. Eaves, Optima e Agmena.

E) Avaliação

Após a realização da busca, com um conjunto de fontes pré-definido pode-se iniciar a avaliação, usando da Matriz de seleção, na qual “o designer deverá atribuir uma pontuação para cada fonte em relação aos critérios. Essa pontuação também deve seguir uma escala de 1 a 5, sendo 1 para a fonte que atende pouco e 5 para a fonte que atende completamente ao critério” (MEÜRER, 2017).

A avaliação resultou na matriz a seguir.

Fonte	Variações (3)	Aspectos Hist. (4)	Expressão (5)	Suporte (2)	Licenciamento (1)	Investimento (3)
Linotype Trajanus	4	4	2	5	5	3
Palatino	4	3	1	5	5	3
Baskerville	4	3	3	5	5	3
Mrs. Eaves	5	5	4	5	5	3
Optima	4	3	1	5	5	3
Agmena	4	4	3	5	5	3

Figura 29: Matriz de seleção tipográfica, comparando diferentes famílias de fontes para o projeto.

Dando continuidade ao processo, as fontes Agmena e Mrs. Eaves, que tiveram melhor colocação na matriz de seleção, foram testadas em

diversos tamanhos e pesos para uma avaliação final e decisiva, na qual a fonte Mrs. Eaves foi avaliada como a mais apropriada para o projeto.

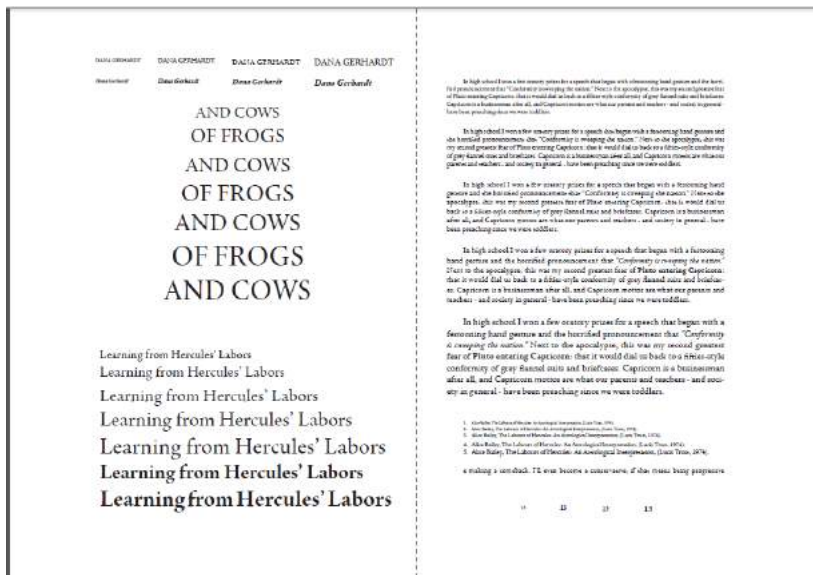


Figura 30: Teste de impressão da fonte Agmena

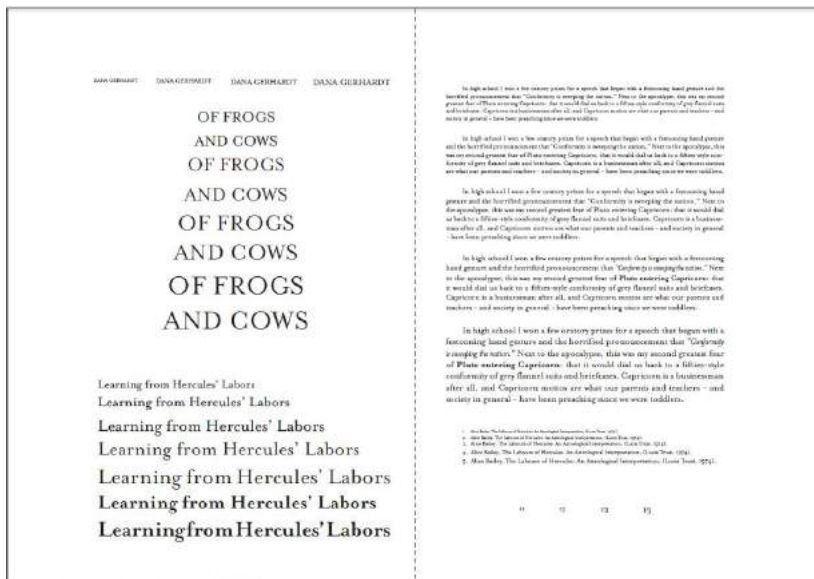


Figure 31: Teste de impressão da fonte Mrs. Eaves

A fonte Mrs. Eaves é uma releitura da fonte Baskerville, criada por Zuzana Licko, em homenagem a Sarah Eaves, esposa de John Baskerville. O fator mais interessante da fonte é a diferença na sua estrutura em cada variação; a versão itálica tem espessura e peso bastante reduzido, assumindo um desenho bastante floreado e delicado, e a versão em negrito ganha muito peso comparada com a regular. Isso garante uma expressividade maior para a fonte, e é especialmente apropriado para o projeto em questão porque ressalta a dinamicidade do texto; o negrito, usado nos títulos e entretítulos se destacaria do corpo de texto, reforçando a hierarquia. Já o itálico, usado em citações, representaria uma clara troca de tom de voz no texto, e causaria uma dinamicidade muito interessante para a mancha gráfica; tudo isso favorece os aspectos definidos durante a fase de pesquisa sobre o cliente e o produto, de que a autora conversa com os personagens e os leitores e dá vida aos arquétipos, de que o texto é místico e vivo, de que a linguagem é poética.

Também é interessante ressaltar o aspecto histórico-cultural da fonte, pois a relação com o universo feminino remete fortemente à autora, bem como a sua afinidade com os arquétipos femininos, estudada durante a fase de pesquisa; e a dinamicidade de seus pesos e o desenho amigável de suas letras traduz bem sua personalidade. Por ser um revival de uma

fonte muito antiga, Mrs. Eaves também remete ao tradicionalismo do estudo da astrologia, e garante seriedade ao texto.

2.5.3 Anatomia da Página.

Uma vez escolhida a fonte principal para o corpo de texto, é possível criar o grid; a malha construtiva, composta por módulos geométricos repetidos, que funciona como referência para a organização da estrutura da página. O grid é uma ferramenta essencial da organização do espaço, da informação, e da composição; a partir dele se mapeia um plano para todo o projeto (TONDREAU, 2009), pois tomando sua estrutura como base é possível dimensionar margens, colunas e manchas, e posicionar elementos textuais e gráficos na página, de maneira coesa, precisa e alinhada.

Nesse projeto, o grid e o diagrama foram criados usando o método, proposto por Castro e Perassi (2013), que utiliza a tipografia como base, e define as etapas de estruturação de um projeto gráfico na seguinte sequência:

1. Definição da tipografia.
2. Estabelecimento da entrelinha.
3. Determinação do módulo.
4. Dimensionamento da forma da página e construção do grid (módulos).
5. Criação de uma escala modular.
6. Representação do diagrama.
7. Distribuição de texto e imagens para compor a mancha gráfica.

Esse método foi aplicado juntamente com a criação do projeto no programa Adobe InDesign®.

A) Definição da tipografia e da entrelinha

Baseando-se nos testes de impressão, a fonte Mrs. Eaves Roman, em tamanho 12pt, foi escolhida para o corpo de texto da publicação, pois resulta em um tamanho agradável de leitura, sem ser grande demais - o que poderia gerar uma mancha gráfica estranha.

Optou-se por uma entrelinha de proporção tradicional, 20% maior que a o tamanho da fonte. Essa proporção é apropriada para o uso de uma fonte serifada, e reforça o aspecto de seriedade e tradicionalismo da publicação. O tamanho da entrelinha então foi definido como 14,4pt.

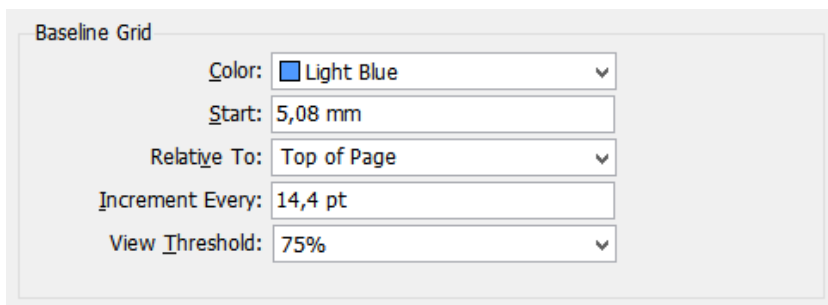


Figura 32: Definição da entrelinha no Adobe Indesign®

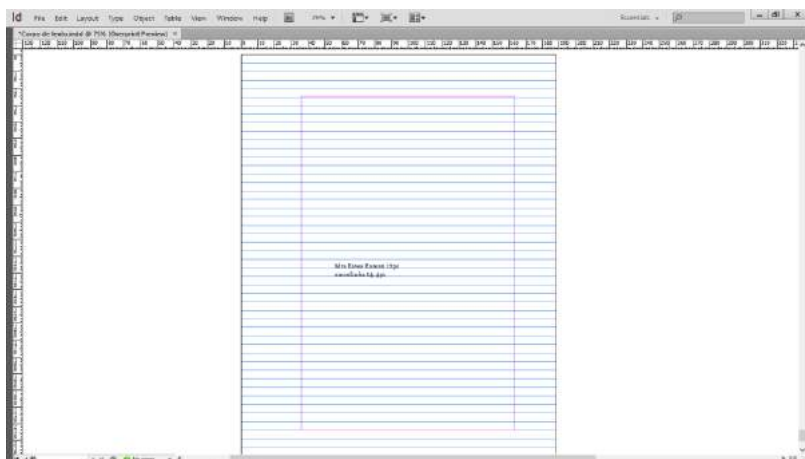


Figura 33: Página com entrelinha aplicada

B) Determinação do módulo

O módulo é determinado como um quadrado de dimensões iguais à entrelinha; porém, diferente da entrelinha, que é medida em pontos, o módulo é definido em milímetros. O tamanho final definido para o módulo foi de 5,0796mm

$$\begin{array}{rcl}
 \text{Ipt} & & 0,35275\text{mm} \\
 14,4\text{pt} & & x \text{ (valor do módulo)} \\
 \\
 x \cdot I & = & 14,4 \cdot 0,35275\text{mm} \\
 x & = & 5,0796\text{mm}
 \end{array}$$

Figura 34: Cálculo do módulo

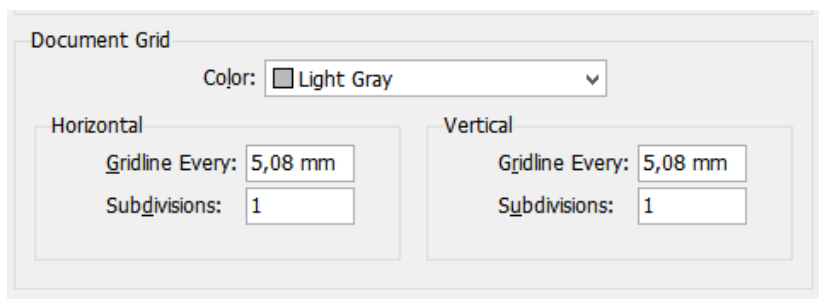


Figura 35: Definição do módulo no Adobe Indesign®

C) Dimensionamento da forma da página

Utilizando o módulo como referência, a página é redimensionada, para que seu tamanho seja equivalente a um número inteiro de módulos, isso garante precisão nas medidas do diagrama.

Formato proposto: 26,7cm x 18,5cm
$267\text{mm} / 5,0796 = 52,56$
53 módulos (arredondamento)
$53 \cdot 5,0796 = 269,21\text{mm}$
$185\text{mm} / 5,0796 = 36,42$
37 módulos (arredondamento)
$37 \cdot 5,0796 = 187,94\text{mm}$
Formato final: 26,9cm x 18,8cm

Figura 36: Cálculo do formato da página de acordo com os módulos

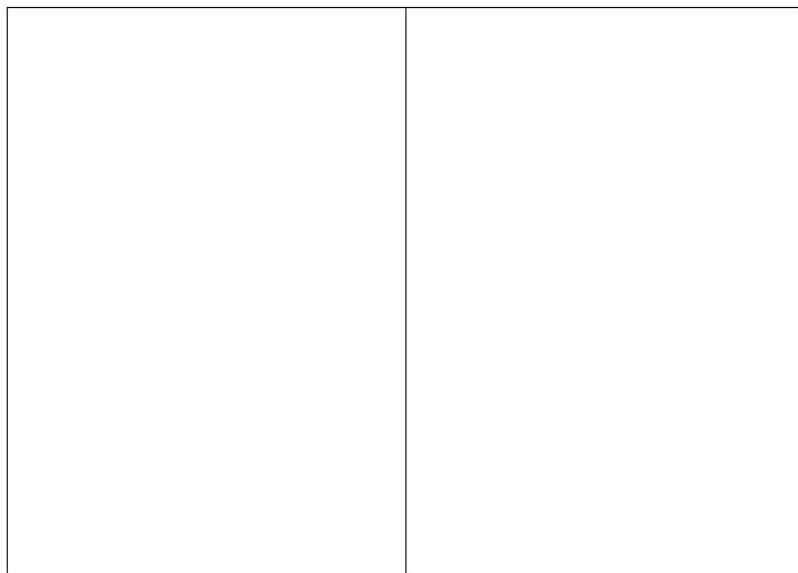


Figura 37: Página com dimensões atualizadas

D) Criação da escala, diagrama e mancha

Nesse projeto, optou-se por criar um diagrama retangular, pois compreende-se que este tipo de organização é mais adaptada ao livro, por ser mais tradicional e associada a livros literários. A dimensão do retângulo que compõe a mancha é calculada a partir da largura do alfabeto, obedecendo a tabela comparativa de média de caracteres por linha. Com uma largura de alfabeto de 140pt, seria usada, para esse projeto, uma largura de coluna entre 18 e 34 paicas, conforme a proposta do signo e a desconstrução aplicada.

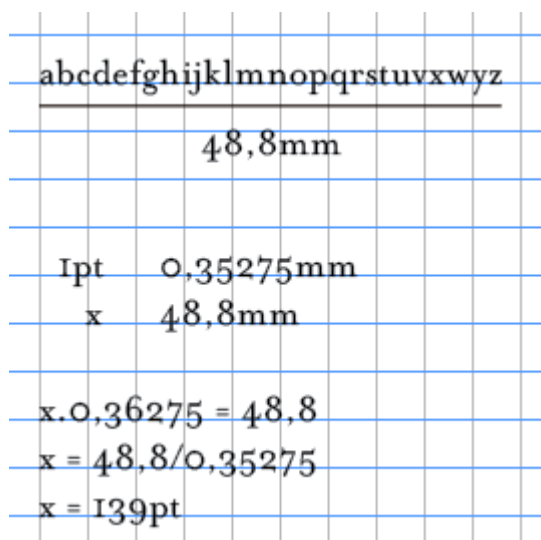


Figura 38: Cálculo da largura do alfabeto

MÉDIA DE CARACTERES POR LINHA																		
LARGURA DA COLUNA (palcas)	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40		
COMPRIMENTO DO ALFABETO em caixa-baixa (portug)	80	40	48	56	64	72	80	88	96	104	112	120	128	136	144	152	160	linha satisfatória
	85	38	45	53	60	68	76	83	91	98	106	113	121	129	136	144	151	linha ideal
	90	36	43	50	57	64	72	79	86	93	100	107	115	122	129	136	143	
	95	34	41	48	55	62	69	75	82	89	96	103	110	117	123	130	137	
	100	33	40	46	53	59	66	73	79	86	92	99	106	112	119	125	132	
	105	32	38	44	51	57	63	70	76	82	89	95	101	108	114	120	127	
	110	30	37	43	49	55	61	67	73	79	85	92	98	104	110	116	122	
	115	29	35	41	47	53	59	64	70	76	82	88	94	100	105	111	117	
	120	28	34	39	45	50	56	62	67	73	78	84	90	95	101	106	112	
	125	27	32	38	43	48	54	59	65	70	75	81	86	91	97	102	108	
	130	26	31	36	41	47	52	57	62	67	73	78	83	88	93	98	104	
	135	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100	
	140	24	29	34	39	44	48	53	58	63	68	73	77	82	87	92	97	
	145	23	28	33	37	42	47	51	56	61	66	70	75	80	84	89	94	
	150	23	28	32	37	41	46	51	55	60	64	69	74	78	83	87	92	
	155	22	27	31	36	40	45	49	54	58	63	67	72	76	81	85	90	
	160	22	26	30	35	39	43	48	52	56	61	65	69	74	78	82	87	
	165	21	25	30	34	38	42	46	51	55	59	63	68	72	76	80	84	
	170	21	25	29	33	37	41	45	49	53	57	62	66	70	74	78	82	
	175	20	24	28	32	36	40	44	48	52	56	60	64	68	72	76	80	
	180	20	23	27	31	35	39	43	47	51	55	59	62	66	70	74	78	
	185	19	23	27	30	34	38	42	46	49	53	57	61	65	68	72	76	
	190	19	22	26	30	33	37	41	44	48	52	56	59	63	67	70	74	
	195	18	22	25	29	32	36	40	43	47	50	54	58	61	65	68	72	
	200	18	21	25	28	32	35	39	42	46	49	53	56	60	63	67	70	
	210	17	20	23	27	30	33	37	40	43	47	50	53	57	60	63	67	
	220	16	19	22	25	29	32	35	38	41	45	48	51	54	57	60	64	
	230	15	18	21	24	27	30	33	36	40	43	46	49	52	55	58	61	
	240	15	17	20	23	26	29	32	35	38	41	44	48	49	52	55	58	
	250	14	17	20	22	25	28	31	34	36	39	42	45	48	50	53	56	
	260	14	16	19	22	24	27	30	32	35	38	41	43	46	49	51	54	
	270	13	16	18	21	23	26	29	31	34	36	39	42	44	47	49	52	
	280	13	15	18	20	23	25	28	30	33	35	38	40	43	45	48	50	
	290	12	15	17	20	22	24	27	29	32	34	37	39	41	44	46	49	
	300	12	14	17	19	21	24	26	28	31	33	35	38	40	42	45	47	
	320	11	13	16	18	20	22	25	27	29	31	34	36	38	40	43	45	
	340	10	13	15	17	19	21	23	25	27	29	32	34	36	38	40	42	
	360	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	

Figura 39: Tabela de Média de Caracteres por Linha

$$\begin{array}{l}
 \text{Ip} \quad 4,233\text{mm} \\
 30\text{p} \quad x \\
 x \cdot I = 30 \cdot 4,233 \\
 x = 126,9\text{mm} \\
 126,9 / 5,08 \text{ (módulo)} = 24,9 \\
 \text{Largura da coluna: } 25 \text{ módulos} / 127\text{mm}
 \end{array}$$

Figura 40: Cálculo do tamanho da coluna

Uma vez definida a área do retângulo, distribuiu-se os módulos restantes da largura da página para compor as margens; essa margem foi definida obedecendo a uma proporção baseada na progressão de Fibonacci, somando quatro a cada número. As margens inferiores e superiores também foram definidas usando números dessa progressão, buscando que o retângulo final fosse análogo à página.

5	5	6	7	9	12	17	25	38	59
margem interna									
5 módulos = $5,08 \cdot 5 = 25,4\text{mm}$									
margem externa									
7 módulos = $5,08 \cdot 7 = 35,56\text{mm}$									
margem superior									
5 módulos = $5,08 \cdot 5 = 25,4\text{mm}$									
margem inferior									
9 módulos = $5,08 \cdot 9 = 45,7\text{mm}$									

Figura 41: Escala e cálculo das margens

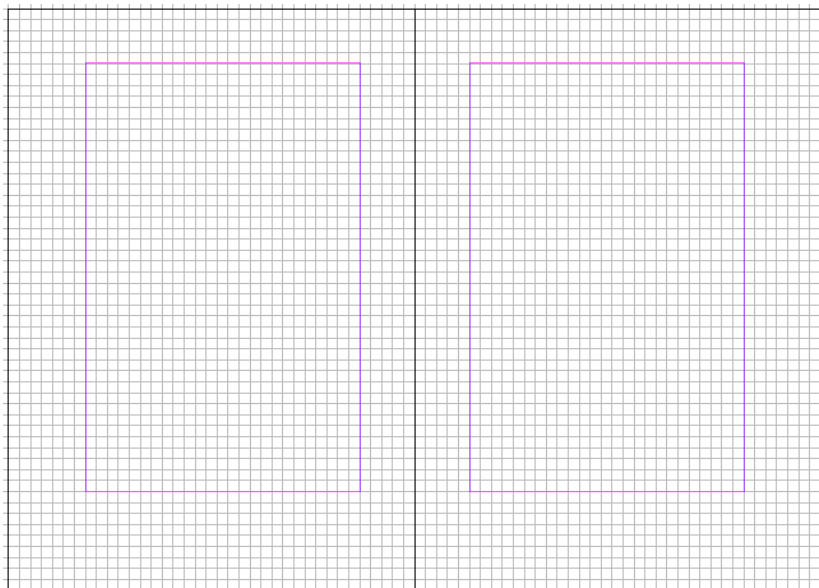


Figura 42: Diagrama final da publicação.

Uma vez definido o diagrama padrão, foi possível posicionar os elementos gráficos e textuais que comporiam a página. Cada elemento gráfico-textual que pode ser utilizado em uma publicação obedece a uma função, e a escolha de quais irão compor a publicação favorece diferentes experiências de leitura.

Para este projeto, não havia a necessidade de elementos dinâmicos que destaquem trechos, como olhos ou citações destacadas, pois como definido nas fases anteriores, a prioridade é a leitura contínua dos artigos. Nesse caso, seria mais interessante usar elementos que ajudassem a localizar e navegar pelo livro, como guias e o fôlio. Optou-se portanto, pelo uso de um fôlio para marcar a página, um guia lateral que identificasse o capítulo atual, através do símbolo do signo, e um guia superior, trazendo o nome da autora e do livro; este último valorizaria a identidade do livro e da autora, reforçando aspectos do produto como obra séria e provedora de conhecimento.

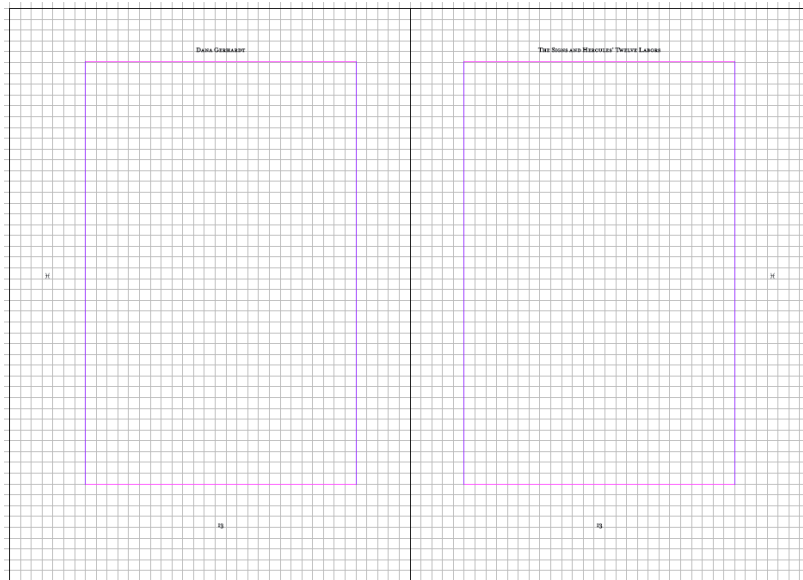


Figura 43: Página mestra, com elementos gráficos textuais posicionados.

2.5.4 A expressão de cada signo

Uma vez definida a composição padrão das páginas, pode-se dar início ao processo criativo a que se propõe o projeto, de que em cada capítulo essa composição seja transformada e adaptada para expressar graficamente, através dos elementos editoriais, os conceitos que definem cada signo; como definido nas primeiras etapas do projeto.

Neste relatório, optou-se por registrar somente o processo de produção dos capítulos referentes a Peixes e Capricórnio, pois todos os outros seriam criados seguindo o mesmo método, por isso, as próximas páginas trarão apenas os painéis e conceitos referentes a esses dois signos; ao final do processo, os painéis, conceitos e definições dos outros signos serão mostrados.

Entende-se que a capacidade de traduzir os conceitos imateriais em expressão gráfica só seria possível através de um conhecimento prévio de como se desenvolve essa relação entre a imagem e a ideia. A capacidade de uma composição de assumir sentidos, sensações ou emoções, é entendida na Teoria da Forma como *Gestalt*, que significa “totalidade” (SAMARA, 2010). Através de relações de proximidade, repetição, alinhamento, proporção, cor e forma é possível sugerir sensações de

profundidade, movimento e ritmo. Sozinhos, esses efeitos comunicam pouco, mas quando combinados, passam a expressar sensações e emoções mais complexas.

O primeiro passo então, foi extrair esses conceitos através da leitura dos artigos de Dana Gerhardt que compõem a publicação. Simultaneamente, painéis visuais foram criados, a partir de imagens e metáforas que representassem os arquétipos, com o intuito de organizar visualmente os conceitos de cada signo. Esse processo, de tornar visual um conceito, através de metáforas já existentes, possibilita uma rápida identificação de como ocorre sua expressão em linguagem gráfica; através da análise das formas, texturas e cores predominantes.

O Signo de Peixes representa Suavidade, Sensibilidade, o sentimento de conexão e comunidade, Dissolução, Ilusão, Névoa, Fantasia, Poesia, a perda de limites, Confusão, Distorção. Para compor o painel visual, foram escolhidas imagens borradas, confusas e distorcidas, formas com limites apagados ou indefinidos, bem como imagens que trouxessem metáforas para esses conceitos, como as sereias como representações da fantasia, imagens surrealistas e imagens do oceano, representando dissolução e a união de todas as águas em uma só.

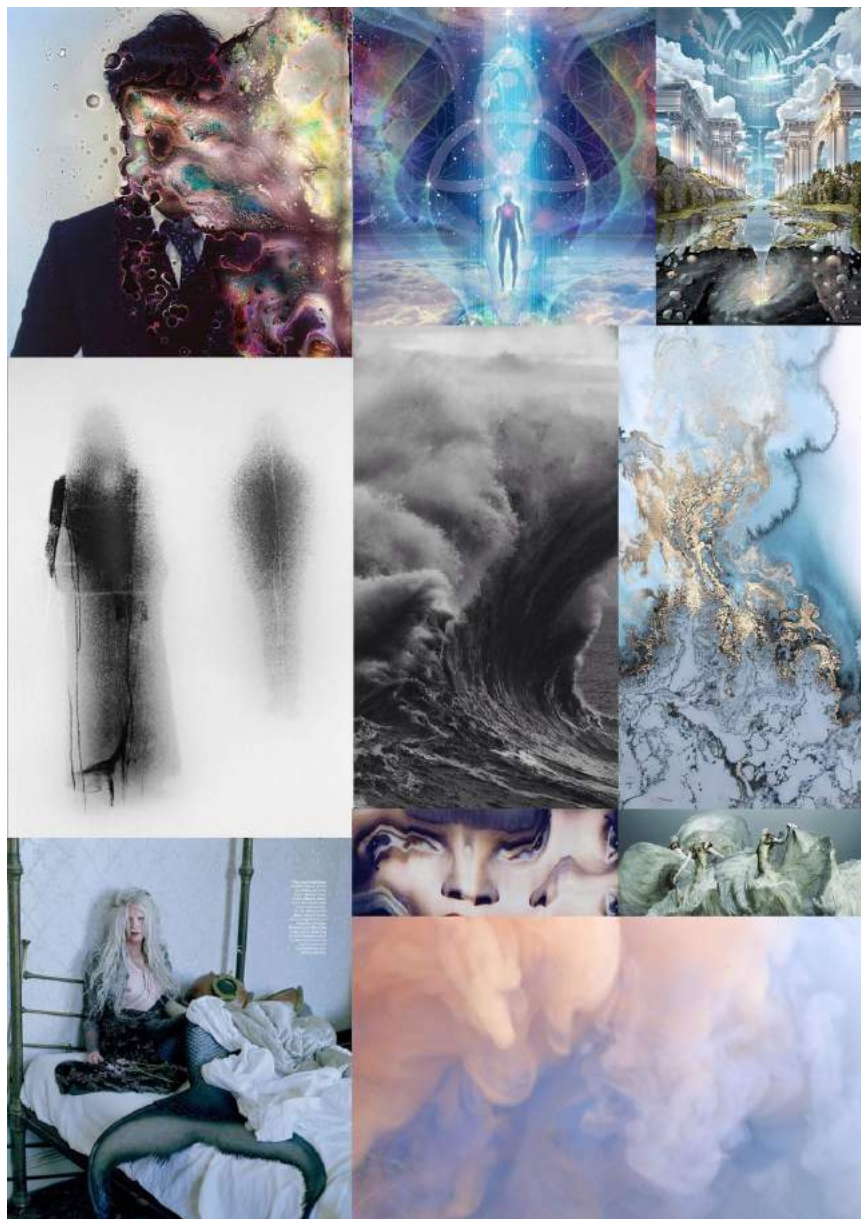


Figura 44: Resumo do painel referente a Peixes. O painel completo pode ser encontrado em <https://br.pinterest.com/guamrs/peixes>

Baseando-se no painel, elementos, texturas e efeitos gráficos que fossem análogos aos conceitos, ou que evocassem as mesmas sensações e sentimentos, foram formulados. Para Peixes, escolheu-se usar de efeitos que remetessem à fluidez da água, como efeitos aquarelados, formas borradas, distorcidas ou com efeito que simulasse derretimento, bem como texturas de água e névoa, que remetem à insipidez. Seriam feitas também, alterações nas formas e diagramas que trouxessem sensação de instabilidade e confusão, como a fluidez dos elementos textuais, que sairiam do seu lugar determinado na página e se misturariam ao texto, abrindo espaço na mancha; ou ainda a distorção e ondulação das bordas que definem a mancha gráfica, criando manchas instáveis, fluidas e arredondadas, que também poderiam se movimentar pelo espaço da página, remetendo à perda dos limites e da noção de realidade, características citadas no artigo de peixes.

PEIXES	
Suavidade	Elementos textuais se movendo pela página, se misturando ao texto
Sensibilidade	
Conexão	
Diluir	Formas arredondadas
Névoa	
Distorção	Textura de água e névoa
Confusão	
Ilusão	Efeitos aquarelados, diluídos, borrados e derretidos
Perder Limites	
Fantasia	Surrealismo
	Mudar a forma e a posição das caixas de textos, extrapolando as margens do diagrama.
	Instabilidade e fluidez nos elementos e formas.

Figura 45: Quadro associando os conceitos do signo de Peixes com os efeitos gráficos formulados.

Estes efeitos foram aplicados mantendo em mente definições feitas durante as fases anteriores de pesquisa, ou seja, buscando equilibrar expressividade com experiência de leitura - cuidando para que a legibilidade e leiturabilidade não fosse comprometida a ponto de trazer problemas, mas permitindo que esses critérios fossem desestabilizados, justamente pelo signo de Peixes propor confusão e perda de estruturas. Distorções mais significativas foram aplicadas a textos com tamanho e pesos maiores ou a imagens, e mesmo nas manchas de texto não convencionais, houve o cuidado de não gerar viúvas ou órfãs¹.

The Ethereal Thread of the Universe

Love and Unlimited Possibilities

Figura 46: Subtítulos do capítulo de peixes

3am! He killed the artful shepherd. Geryon came running.
 Poor Warren, I though hot one arrow that pierced all three of the monster's formidable
 been more enlightened. W k! Thwack! Thwack! Hercules herded the red cows into his golden
 The astrologer would hav to the tall mountain, returned Apollo's gift, and began the cat-
 with plenty of imaginatio ne. You'd think his work was nearly done, but going
 follow his inspiratio and, he was attacked by DANA GERHARDT thieves. His best bull
 then his Virgo Moo ll the way to Italy; Hercu- les had to wrestle
 to ground his Pisces se et it back. Next Hera sent a terrible gadfly that scattered
 in all directions. The hero had to drain a river in order to finally
 I met Warren when .
 limited imagination my ction than we typically think of undertaking in our Pisces house!
 by becoming somethin of the red cows is enticing. Cows offer sustenance; red is the color
 an actor, or some othe ty, and power. The red cows symbolize the nourishing power of
 That was the 80's, wh ited possibilities—the Pisces treasure. Look at your Pisces house or
 depth psychology was ere a dream you'd like to manifest? How far are you willing to go for

Figura 47: Guias do capítulo de Peixes, se mesclando à mancha gráfica

¹ Viúvas e órfãs são termos usados para designar quebras de linhas inadequadas em uma mancha gráfica. A viúva acontece quando a última linha de um parágrafo é impressa sozinha na página seguinte ao parágrafo de origem; já a órfã acontece a primeira linha de um parágrafo é impressa sozinha na página, e o resto do parágrafo é impresso somente na página seguinte.

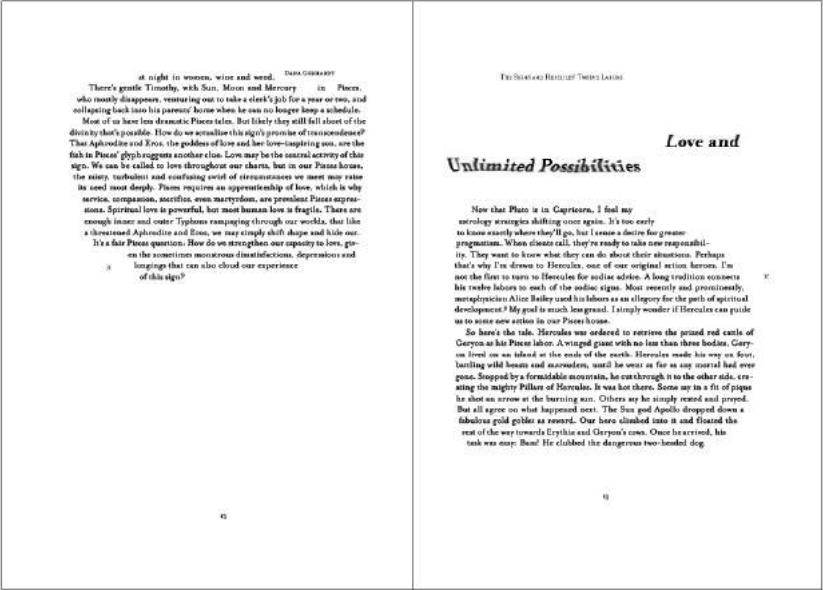


Figura 48: Página do capítulo de Peixes, com guias fora de posição e diagramas distorcidos

Para o spread inicial do capítulo de Peixes, utilizou-se uma textura que simulasse fumaça, interagindo em transparência com o título do capítulo, além disso, o próprio título foi borrado, gerando um efeito de perda de nitidez, em que o texto do título se confunde com a bruma. Para a capa do capítulo optou-se por uma foto de águas movimentadas, com ondas e espumas, aplicando o efeito ondulado também ao nome do signo, sugerindo que o mesmo estava sendo distorcido ou diluído pelas ondas.



Figura 49: Título do capítulo de Peixes.

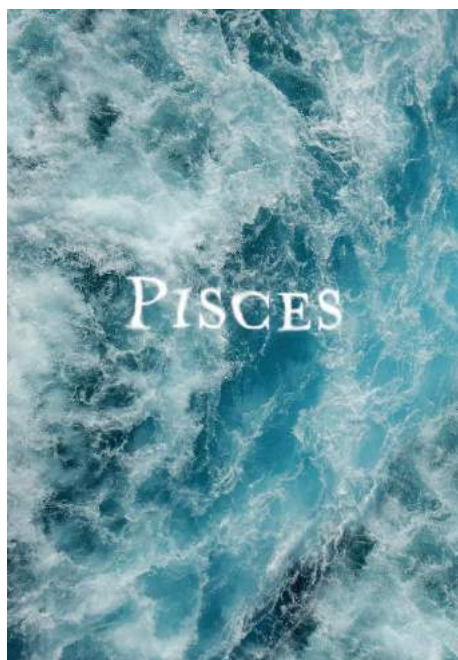


Figura 50: Capa do capítulo de Peixes

A seguir está representado o capítulo completo do signo de Peixes

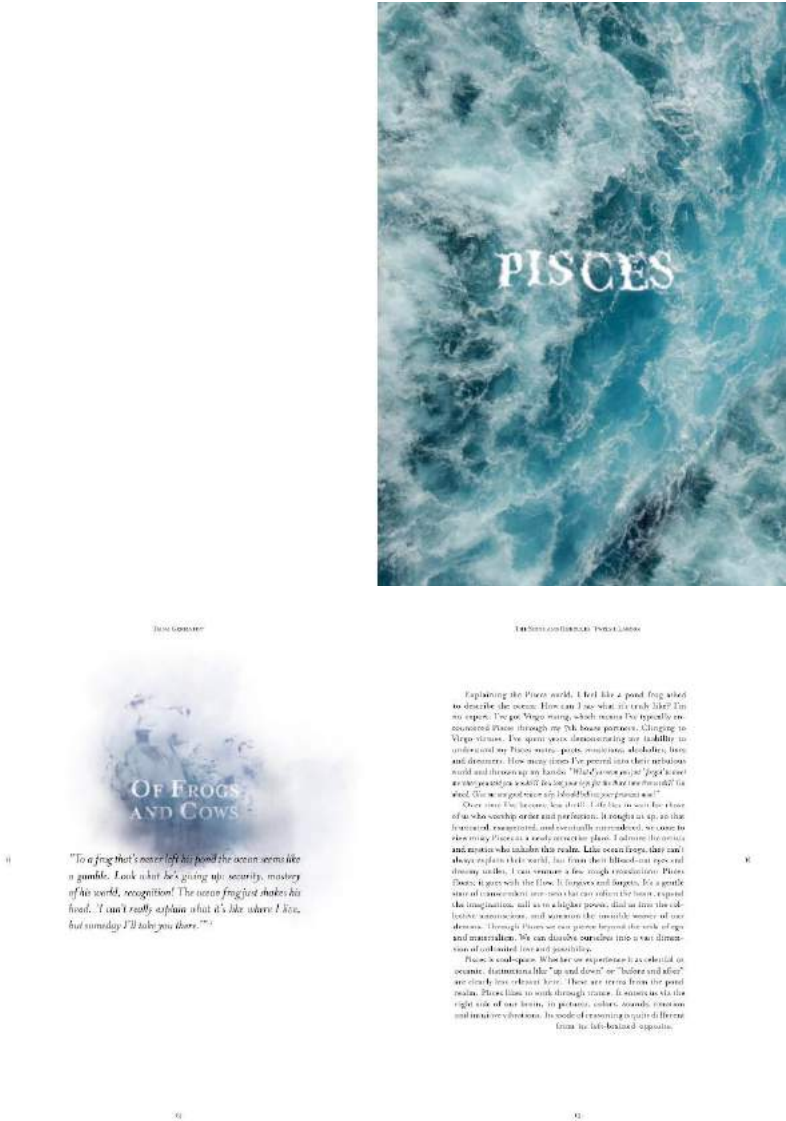


Figura 51: Spreads do capítulo de Peixes

[illegible]

Unlimited Possibilities

Love and

[illegible]

Sam! Best! He killed the awful sheepdog. Geronimo said running. He told them how to shoot the pistol all three of the manners. He told them how to shoot the pistol all three of the manners. He told them how to shoot the pistol all three of the manners.

[illegible]

along the way. These *do* only seem surprising and strange, but they're actually familiar characters. They're the lower desires and negative thoughts that constantly reassert your base personality. They are your addictions—the substances and habits that weigh you down, or the thoughts that routinely drag you down. If you can keep alert and forward-moving, you'll create a structure of determination and focus that's as mighty as Hercules' Pillars.

You can't get beyond the pillars, however, which are also bracing your inner gods. Releasing your demons this way is like dumping a giant public toilet water, so that it can ripple east and shift the world, unearthing the possibility of something new better rearing back. As an education that your dreams may not be big enough! You do of course need to believe in magic—which means the next course: divine intervention or grace. When he's gone as far as you have ever gone, Hercules receives a divine nudge. This symbol of the golden rule suggests my number of other-worldly Powers become synchronicity, imagination, intuition, spiritual guidance, like the cap that . . .

Paganism sometimes has both external and internal deities. In addition, the gods are neither gods nor goddesses, but persons who live and breathe. The central concept of Paganism is the notion of all people are powerful, and find an outlet to their abilities. Hence Paganism is:

Figura 53: Spreads do capítulo de Peixes

The galeata is gift from the Sun god,
 evidence for the age. In one version of the story,
 Hercules enters the Sun's chamber. He simply walks in to
 find peace. Which could be better for you depends on your balance
 of reason and earth. If your intention is overly generous, you may need
 to diminish your ego's claims with an eye-dilating practice like chant
 or meditation. If you're ungrounded and overly emotional, your ego's
 boundaries may be porous and thin. Particularly if you have more
 than planets like Sun, Mars, or Saturn in Pisces, you may need
 to strengthen yourself. Perhaps, the final journey toward
 your pillars may bring the greatest growth: after
 that, you can run to your devotion
 and wait for grace.

Book 6 (continued)

Either way,
 once you release
 your intention, you must
 enter a quiet. Peace state. When
 Hercules climbs into the golden galeata,
 he steps advancing in a conscious way. He
 receives influence. He acts. This is the stepping
 done in dreams, meditations, or trance. Robert Bucke,
 a pioneering corpus in nonconditional feeling, has ob-
 served, "Way beyond people, who start in a personal condition
 to step in to a new method by means of a god. He could advance
 to be a god himself." In other words, his and ours
 journey with Geryon.

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The Sun and Hercules' Third Lesson

Excerpt 3 (cont.)

Reborn, Her South Node, Sun, Venus and Mars
 are in Virgo with a lone North Node in Pisces. Despite her
 diverse wonders and the beauty of her arching body, she is found
 the maiden at will. She walked eight days and it seems
 was always on the river, chasing from shore to shore. When she
 wasn't working, her mind was spinning with water on land and
 then, "Oh Geryon and us," she said, "They're going," she im-
 ploded, "as we are and take together." I asked her if she was
 just as still, with a cup of tea perhaps, and enjoyed the
 bliss that all her work had brought her. She shook
 her head. "No... just as it."

20

Without stopping and
 stepping away from ordinary life,
 reaching a peak Pisces experience is diffi-
 cult. After resting in his cap, Hercules enters at
 the island of unlimited possibilities and quickly ex-
 plodes how long he's waited for his hero's journey
 space and time, accomplishing in minutes what might have
 taken years in an easy stream. I am reminded of what my med-
 itation teacher often says: that meditation is not just sitting
 out, it's looking up. For those to bring a peak experi-
 ence, we must be awake and open, clearly re-
 ceptive to a non-ordinary reality.

21

Dr. Jean Houston, a philosopher
 and innovator in human capacities, has often
 speculated that our brain's transmuting and unconditioned instrumen-
 talismans, multiple realities, and uncharted of potentials. It's no surprise
 that Houston has lived in Pisces. Evidently his life's mission is expand our be-
 liefs to what's possible.

After a peak experience, we must always re-enter the world. This can be the
 most difficult leg of the journey—reintegrating our Pisces treasure into the pres-
 ent. Our real course may be an ecstatic meditation, a vision or message from spirit
 guides, or a transformation, bringing an overwhelming love for the world as
 simply reality. This gift being new power, unlike Hercules, we will be chal-
 lenged. I know, rocky trails, and goddesses whisper how quickly our gift
 can vanish if we're not vigilant. But we can't not try. It's how we
 just might realize our own destiny. I like how Jean Houston sees the Pi-
 ces Aqueducts' journey with a single line.

"We are not just gods-in-being, we are gods-in-making."

22

The Sun and Hercules' Fourth Lesson

23

Notes

1. Calvert Books (2000), *The Fourth Race* (Oxford: 1991), p. 191.
2. *Mythology* (2000).
3. After Riley, *The Lessons of Hercules: An Annotated Interpretation* (Austin: 1994).
4. Paul Goble, *The Adolescent's Mythical Journey* (1975), p. 177.
5. Robert C. Bucke and Gary Solove, *The Book of Hercules* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 204-215.
6. Jean Houston, *The Power of the Creative*, 1978, p. 19.

© 2000 Jean Houston. The words are mine to 2000.

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Figura 54: Spreads do capítulo de Peixes

Já o signo de Capricórnio representa o pragmatismo e seriedade, o materialismo, as estruturas sustentadoras, como burocracia e trabalho, o tradicionalismo, a dedicação, persistência, a experiência de vida, e situações duras de submissão às estruturas. Para ilustrar esses conceitos, foram escolhidas imagens que representassem seriedade e tradicionalismo, como ternos e roupas formais, com texturas ásperas e cruas; imagens de árvores antigas e pessoas idosas representam a experiência, a dedicação e o sentimento tortuoso dos conceitos, assim como as imagens de ossos, madeira e besouros representam dureza, resistência e estruturas que sustentam. Tons terrosos e sóbrios, às vezes soturnos, reforçam a seriedade e o materialismo, bem como um forte contraste de formas e imagens “preto-no-branco”.



Figura 55: Resumo do painel referente a Capricórnio. O painel completo pode ser encontrado em <http://pinterest.com/guamrs/capricornio>

Em Capricórnio, não coube usar efeitos que distorcessem ou alterassem a estrutura definida - muito pelo contrário, foi importante manter, e se possível reforçar, as estruturas que compõem o diagrama. Escolheu-se focar em elementos do próprio design editorial que remetesse à seriedade e tradicionalismo, elementos tradicionais do Design Editorial, como o florão e a capitular. Esses elementos não só remetem a antiguidade e reforçam respeito, como também são práticos e econômicos no uso, remetendo ao aspecto frio e duro do signo; aspecto que também foi reforçado pela falta de espaços em branco entre as seções do capítulo. A estrutura do diagrama foi reforçada usando caixas em volta do texto; caixas estas que iam se acumulando a medida que o texto avançava, remetendo ao crescimento estruturado, e trazendo um aspecto elegante ao capítulo.

CAPRICÓRNIO	
Seriedade	Formas quadradas, ângulos retos
Frieza	Caixas
Duro	Texturas Duras e Ásperas, Mámore, Pedra,
Áspero	Cascas, Ossos, Cordas
Materialismo	Economia de páginas, pouco espaço em branco
Pragmatismo	Mancha de texto densa e estável
Organizado	Grid aparente, A Estrutura da página como
Estruturação	elemento visual
Tradicionalismo	
Elegante	Layout Tradicional
Antigo	Florão entre seções
Soturno	Camadas, sedimentação

Figura 56: Quadro associando os conceitos do signo de Capricórnio com definições editoriais

Os efeitos aplicados estão mostrados nas imagens a seguir.

sharing rooms with chickens and cow dung, where they have to - gasp - do actual chores.

Capricorn's humor is ironic and dry, which is just the sort of thing to get us through hard times. I suspect as the end nears, things will get funnier and funnier. With the zeal of a French peasant watching privileged heads roll, I hope all the greedy bastards get what they deserve. As for you and me, we've got our own work to do.

I have many intuit
of them, each v
me a special mission,
or friends. Like the cl
they're ordinary peopl
they fly, time travel, i
breaking bones. Inste
their happy consumer



Learning from Hercules' Labors

In high school I won a few oratory prizes for a speech that began with a festooning hand gesture and the horrified pronouncement that "Conformity is sweeping the nation." Next to the apocalypse, this was my second greatest fear of

Figura 57: Capitular, Florão e Título.

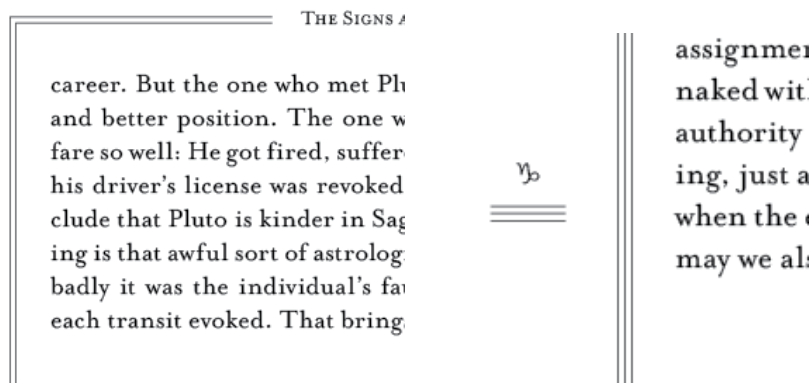


Figura 58: Molduras criando efeito de caixas e linhas de apoio análogas

Da mesma maneira, uma abertura para o capítulo, com uma textura e uma intervenção tipográfica foi elaborada. Nesse caso, escolheu-se usar uma imagem de uma superfície de mármore escura, remetendo tanto à seriedade e rigidez, como também à elegância. A tipografia foi editada de modo a lembrar uma estrutura trincada, mas ainda firmemente unida, análoga à própria estrutura do mármore.



Figura 59: Tipografia editada para a capa do capítulo de Capricórnio

A seguir está representado o capítulo completo referente a Capricórnio.



Figura 60: Spread do capítulo de Capricórnio



Figura 64: Resumo do painel referente a Áries. O painel completo pode ser encontrado em <https://br.pinterest.com/guamrs/aries/>

ÁRIES	
	Elementos em <i>itálico</i> ou <i>obliquos</i> , remetendo a velocidade
Ação	Espacejamento menor de texto
Força	Interrupções no parágrafo, com elementos posicionados bruscamente
Energia	Cor Vermelha
Impulso	Texturas de papel rasgado
Início	Efeitos borrados, vultos e linhas
Primitivo	Formas que remetam à impacto, rabiscos, marcas de mão, rasgos

Figura 65: Quadro associando os conceitos do signo de Áries com definições editoriais

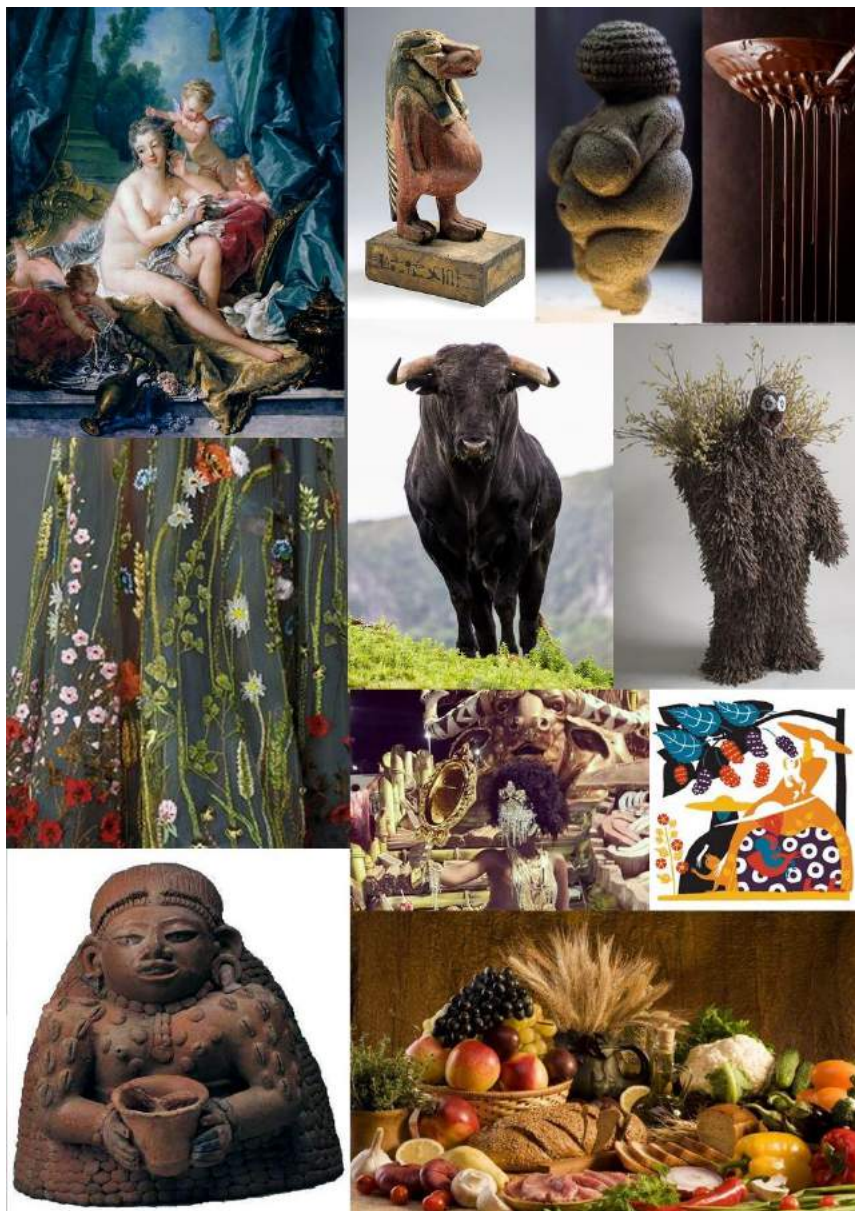


Figura 66: Resumo do painel referente a Touro. O painel completo pode ser encontrado em <https://br.pinterest.com/guamrs/touro/>

TOURO	
	A forma da página se altera aos poucos ao longo do texto
Paciência	Elementos textuais se curvando e se apoiando sobre as caixas de texto
Lânguido	Caixas de texto "cedendo" ao peso do entretítulo
Estabilidade	Forma da página mais condensada, horizontal
Terra	Texturas de terras, raízes, cascas de árvore
Beleza	Volume, Negrito
Fertilidade	
Abundante	
	Elementos floridos crescendo ao longo das margens

Figura 67: Quadro associando os conceitos do signo de Touro com definições editoriais

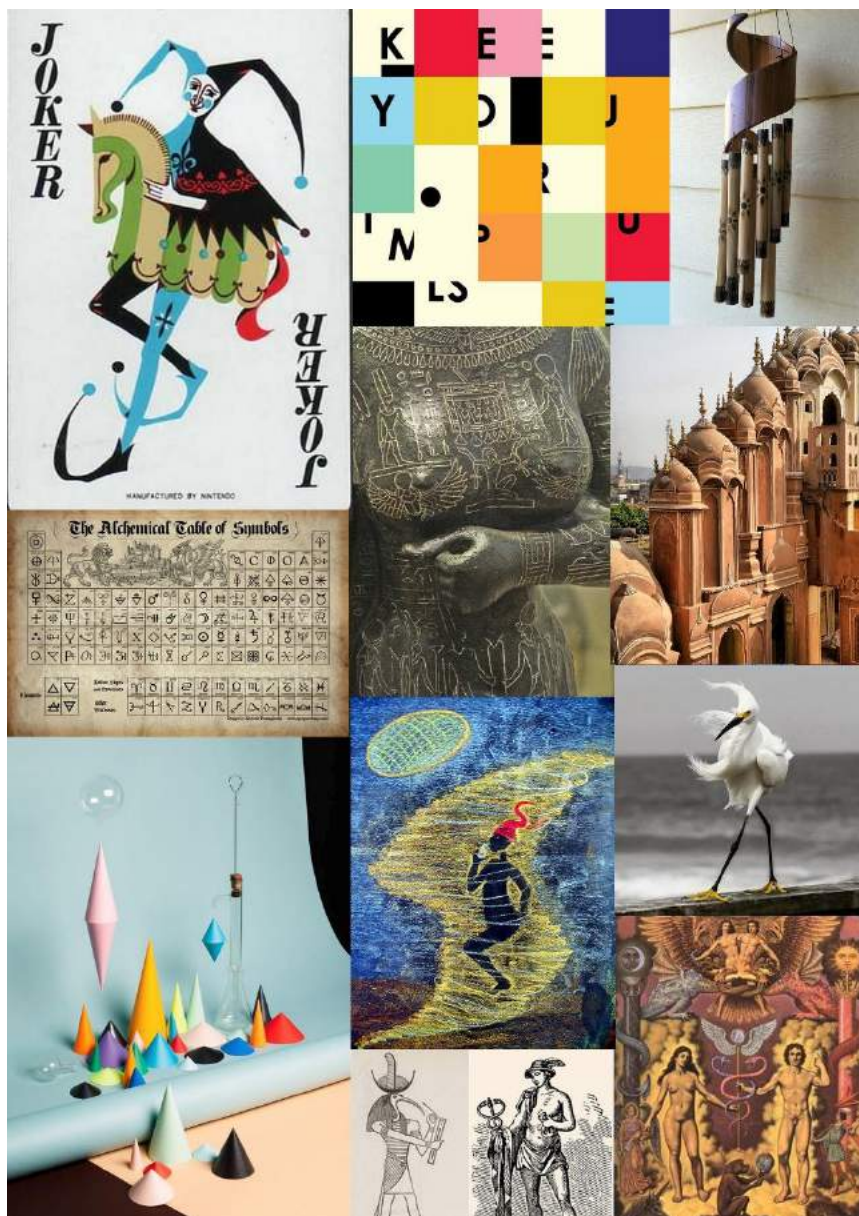


Figura 68: Resumo do painel referente a Gêmeos. O painel completo pode ser encontrado em <https://br.pinterest.com/guamrs/gemeos/>

GÊMEOS	
Multiplicidade	Manchas de texto variando de formato e orientação, colunas mais estreitas, mais largas, e manchas modulares
Inconstância	
Adaptação	Entretítulos em zigue-zague, ou trocando de orientação (espelhadas, de cabeça pra baixo)
Comunicação	Texturas de materiais de escritório, papéis ou canetas
Velocidade	
Mental	
	Cores vibrantes, neon

Figura 69: Quadro associando os conceitos do signo de Gêmeos com definições editoriais

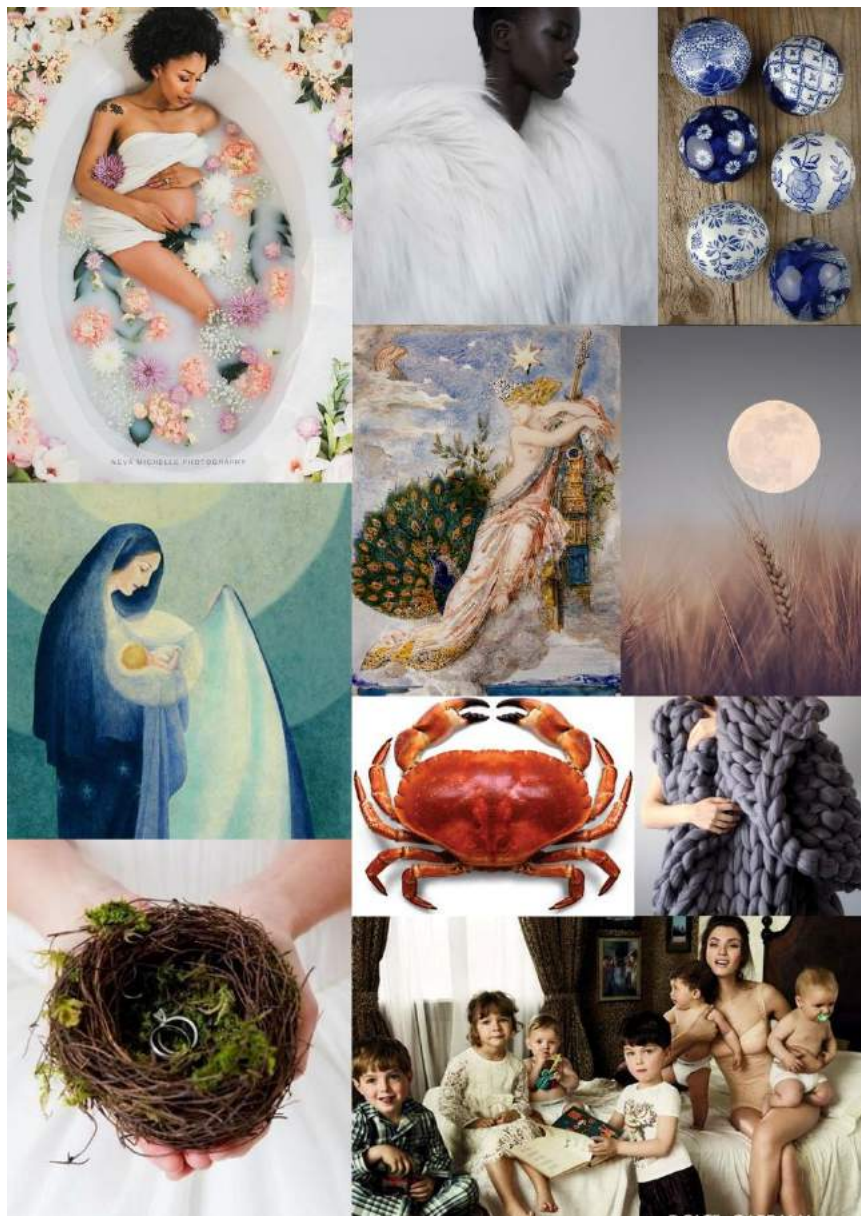


Figura 70: Resumo do painel referente a Câncer. O painel completo pode ser encontrado em <https://br.pinterest.com/guamrs/cancer/>

CÂNCER	
Timidez	Manchas de texto menores, ocupando menos espaço
Intuição	Texto das páginas anteriores permanece, em opacidade menor, nas páginas seguintes, construindo um ninho pra mancha gráfica
Apego	
Passado	
	Imagem da Lua (representação da intuição feminina)
	Guias envolvendo a mancha gráfica
Cuidado	Mancha cresce ao longo do tempo (relação com a gestação, ciclo da lua)
Proteção	Mancha arredondada
Maternidade	Texturas macias e acolhedoras (pelos, lã, tricô)

Figura 71: Quadro associando os conceitos do signo de Câncer com definições editoriais



Figura 72: Resumo do painel referente a Leão. O painel completo pode ser encontrado em <https://br.pinterest.com/guamrs/leao/>

LEÃO	
Dignidade	Teatralidade e drama na composição, se possível, até na estrutura do texto
Exuberância	Entretítulos projetam sombra na página, como se estivessem iluminados por um holofote
Expressão	
Autoridade	Uso de molduras
Alegria	Manchas em movimento
Otimismo	Texturas alegres, confete, serpentina, glitter

Figura 73: Quadro associando os conceitos do signo de Leão com definições editoriais



Figura 74: Resumo do painel referente a Virgem, o painel completo pode ser encontrado em <https://br.pinterest.com/guamrs/virgem/>

VIRGEM	
	Entrelinha maior, criando um diagrama mais esguio e uma mancha mais limpa
Sensatez	Imagens de animais delicados (borboletas, coelhos, cervos) nas margens do texto, remetendo à pureza
Servitude	
Pureza	Texturas que remetam à trabalho manual e com a terra (palha, trigo, bordado)
	Mancha de texto justificada ao centro, criando a sensação de ordem
Precisão	Ordenar as caixas de texto e guias na página por ordem de tamanho
Racionalidade	
Organização	Textura de malha de pequenos pontos, dando sensação de organização

Figura 75: Quadro associando os conceitos do signo de Virgem com definições editoriais

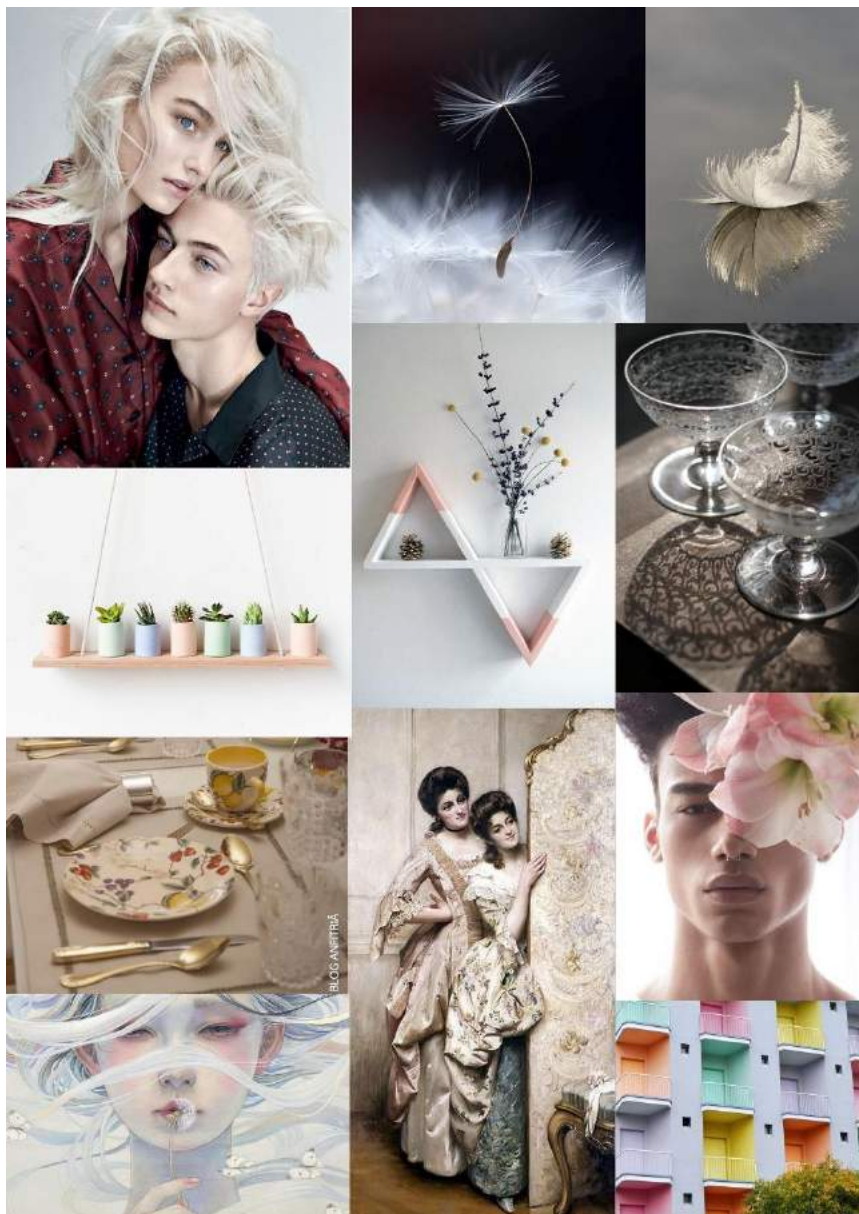


Figura 76: Resumo do painel referente a Libra. O painel completo pode ser encontrado em <https://br.pinterest.com/guamrs/libra/>

LIBRA	
União	Manchas gráficas em formatos complementares
Imparcialidade	Elementos maiores, como o entretítulo, fazem a composição de página "pender" para um lado, como uma balança
Equilíbrio	
Leveza	Uso de cores pastéis e leves elementos decorativos vitorianos
Sensibilidade	Textura de pluma, ou pena nos entretítulos, remetendo a leveza
Harmonia	

Figura 77: Quadro associando os conceitos do signo de Libra com definições editoriais

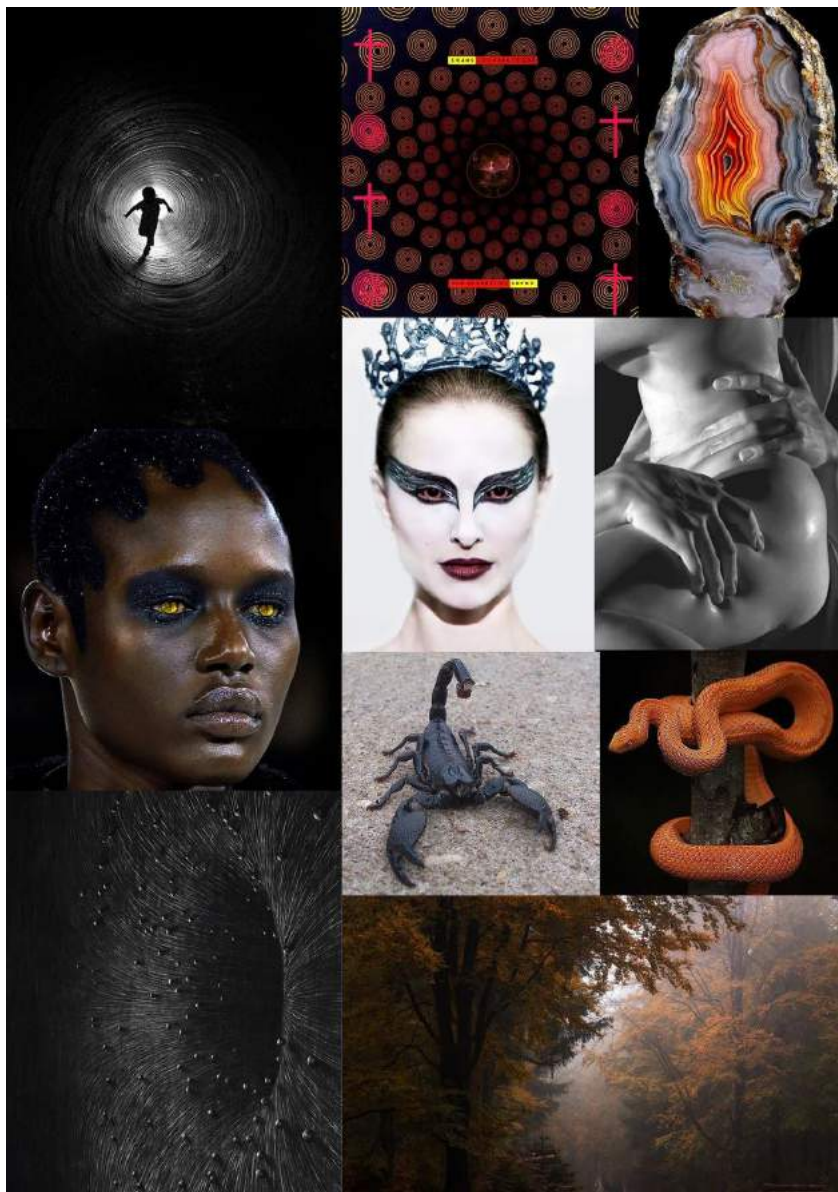


Figura 78: Resumo do painel referente a Escorpião. O painel completo pode ser encontrado em <http://pin.it/UXu-GNO>

ESCORPIÃO	
Obsessão	Entretítulos "penetrando" na mancha gráfica, se aprofundando
Incisivo	Mancha "espiralando" pra dentro do diagrama, diminuindo de tamanho
Intensidade	
Segredo	Usar bordas intercaladas pretas e brancas, criando um efeito de tunelamento na página
Profundidade	
Transformação	Começar com um spread preto, misterioso, e terminar com um spread branco, remetendo à nova vida
Renascimento	
Riqueza	Texturas que remetam à riqueza, pedras preciosas

Figura 79: Quadro associando os conceitos do signo de Escorpião com definições editoriais



Figura 80: Resumo do painel referente a Sagitário. O painel completo pode ser encontrado em <https://br.pinterest.com/guamrs/sagitario/>

SAGITÁRIO	
Movimento	Sangra, elementos "fugindo" da página
Viagem	Elementos na diagonal
Crescimento	Texturas tradicionais de diversos países
Expansão	Entretítulos com fonte maior que o normal
Exagero	Citações em fonte maior, "gritando" e abrindo espaço na mancha gráfica, rementando à expansão
Amplitude	
Horizonte	Espaço em branco

Figura 81: Quadro associando os conceitos do signo de Sagitário com definições editoriais

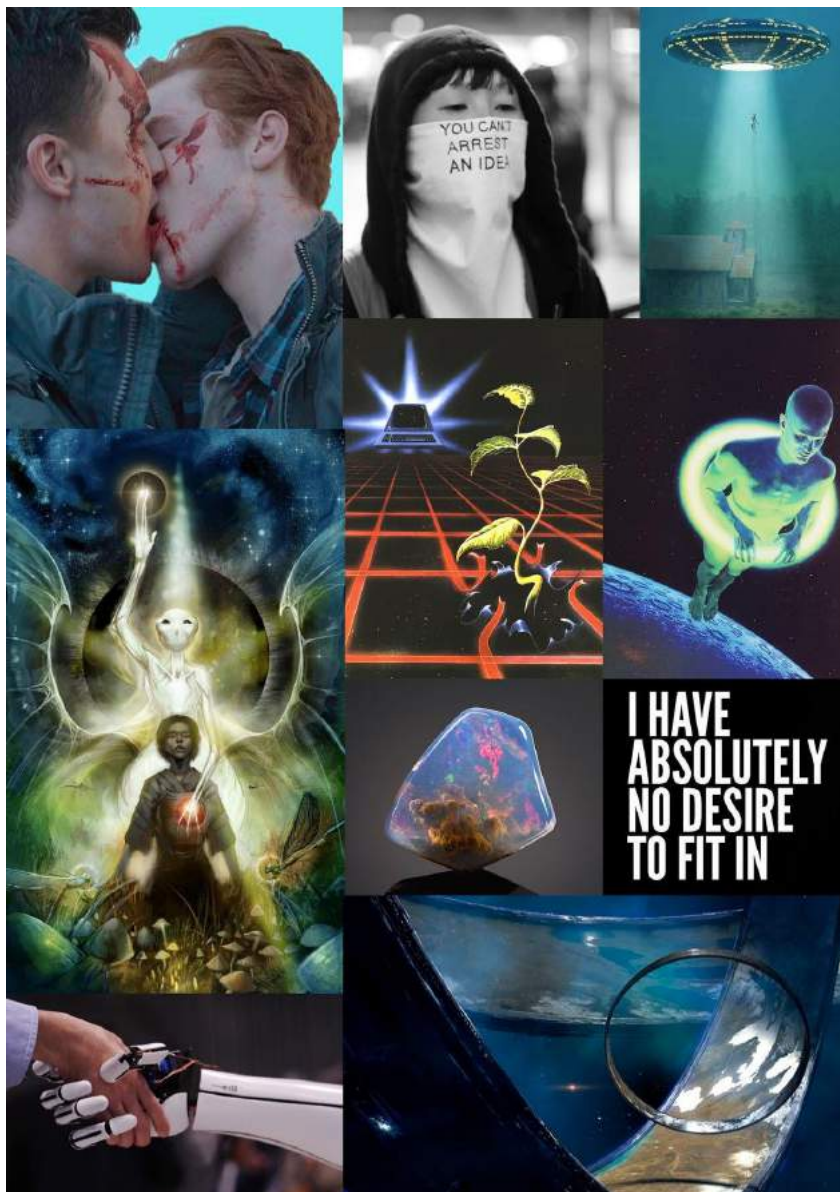


Figura 82: Resumo do painel referente a Aquário. O painel completo pode ser encontrado em <https://br.pinterest.com/guamrs/aquario/>

AQUÁRIO	
Independência	Guias textuais trocarem de lugar na página entre si
Liberdade	Guias abrindo espaço pro texto
Originalidade	Entretítulo solto pela página
Diferente	Mancha de texto virada em 90°, (indo contra a ordem tradicional)
Transgressor	Efeito Glitch
Futurismo	Elementos digitais nos spreads iniciais, como esquemas do diagrama expostos e o caminho das imagens
Visionário	

Figura 83: Quadro associando os conceitos do signo de Aquário com definições editoriais

A seguir estão algumas imagens exemplificando como os efeitos foram aplicados.



Figura 84: Spreads do capítulo de Sagitário



Figura 85: Spreads do capítulo de Aquário

Concluída a etapa de diagramação, pôde-se partir para a etapa de finalização do livro para a produção.

2.5.5 Finalização

A) Páginas adicionais

Algumas páginas foram adicionadas à estrutura do livro, a fim de aprimorar a experiência de leitura; uma folha de rosto, uma folha de rosto falsa e um sumário. A folha de rosto identifica o livro e o autor e, geralmente, editora, local e ano de publicação - esses elementos foram omitidos neste caso, por se tratar de um trabalho acadêmico, de demanda fictícia. A folha de rosto também serve para criar uma transição na entrada do livro, preparando e acostumando o leitor à linguagem gráfica antes do texto. A falsa folha de rosto é uma folha em branco, ou que contenha somente o nome do livro ou um símbolo, que protege a folha de rosto, e que pode ser colada à capa caso o acabamento exija. Nesse caso, optou-se por usar uma folha em branco. O sumário do livro é criado para fins de orientação, mostrando ao leitor em qual página se inicia cada capítulo ou seção. Nesse caso, o sumário foi inserido antes do primeiro artigo, e foi criado usando a mesma família de fontes, hierarquia e diagrama do miolo do livro.

B) Capa

Para a capa do livro, optou-se por criar uma capa simples, que se comunicasse com o estilo gráfico sofisticado e tradicional do livro, omitindo o aspecto experimental do livro. Essa escolha se baseou no fato de que as intervenções e desconstruções editoriais, que conferem estilo à publicação, são baseadas em um arquétipo específico, e buscam representar visualmente um signo a cada capítulo; portanto não seria possível propor um estilo que representasse todas as doze expressões que o livro assume. A composição simples e focada na tipografia se comunica com a proposta editorial do livro, e reforça o aspecto de uma obra bem acabada, veiculadora de conhecimento e ligada à temas ancestrais. A Figura 86 a seguir mostra a proposta de capa executada.

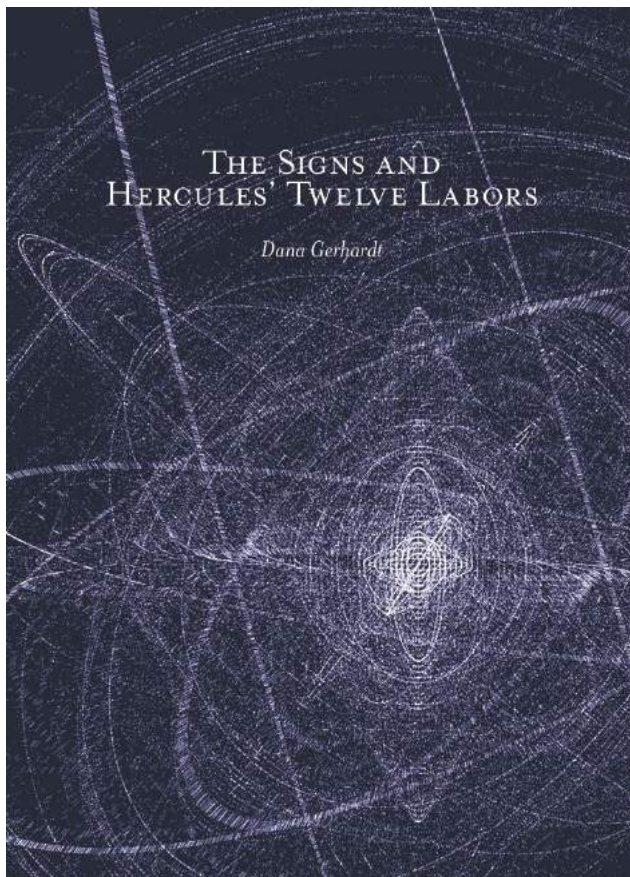


Figura 86: Proposta de capa para o livro.

C) Produção Gráfica

O miolo da publicação foi impresso em papel *offset* de gramatura 120g/m². O papel de alta gramatura é melhor para ser manuseado e garante um baixo atravessamento de tinta, ou seja, impede que a cor impressa em uma página apareça na página inversa. Esse cuidado garante uma maior legibilidade e fidelidade de cores.

A impressão foi feita em sua maioria em preto e branco, usando a impressão em quatro cores somente para os spreads iniciais de cada capítulo, que continham imagens e tipografias coloridas.

Buscando manter a qualidade e a sofisticação propostas ao longo da produção deste projeto, optou-se pela encadernação em capa dura com abertura total, livretos costurados e lombada em tecido. A capa dura não só confere um aspecto mais atraente ao livro, como também garante uma maior preservação, assim como a lombada em tecido, que não se quebra com o tempo; isso reforça a característica do produto de ser uma obra duradoura, com a qual o leitor pode desenvolver uma relação emocional. A encadernação em livretos costurados, com abertura total, garante uma experiência de leitura confortável, e impede que detalhes da diagramação se percam no encontro das páginas.

Com isso, conclui-se o planejamento gráfico-editorial do livro. O fim dessa etapa representa também o fim da fase de Desenvolvimento da Proposta da metodologia de Frascara (2004) e, com isso, o fim deste Projeto.

3. MEMORIAL DESCRITIVO

O livro desenvolvido durante a execução desse projeto foi chamado de “The Signs and Hercules’ Twelve Labors”, obedecendo ao nome original dos artigos, e a autora do livro é Dana Gerhardt.

A publicação tem formato de 26,921cm de altura e 18,794cm de largura. Foi utilizado papel Offset 120g/m² para a impressão do miolo, e para a capa o papel 120g/m² colado sobre papelão. A encadernação foi feita utilizando fólios de 4 páginas, que foram então costurados, garantindo a abertura total. O acabamento foi feito com encadernação em capa dura, lombada quadrada, com 1,6cm, a lombada do livro foi feita e tecido.

Para a diagramação do material, no corpo de texto foi utilizada a família tipográfica Mrs. Eaves, e para as guias laterais que identificam o signo de cada capítulo, foi utilizada a fonte Astrodot Basic. A fonte Mrs. Eaves foi aplicada no corpo de texto com peso *Roman* e *Roman Italic*, em 12pt, com entrelinha de 14,4pt, com exceção dos destaques, em que foi aplicada com tamanho 18pt e entrelinha de 21,6pt; para os títulos de capítulo, foi usada em peso *Bold*, em 36pt e entrelinha de 28,8pt. Para as guias textuais foi usada em peso *Small Caps*, com tamanho 9pt. A fonte Astrodot Basic foi usada em seu peso único, com tamanho 12pt em todas as ocasiões.

A mancha gráfica que compõe a publicação tem margens internas e superiores de 2,54cm, margem externa de 3,556cm, e margem inferior de 4,57cm. O bloco de texto que compõe o corpo do livro tem altura de 19,848cm e largura de 12,7cm. O módulo que compõe o *grid* tem 5,0796mm.

O livro foi planejado para uma impressão em offset em CMYK nas páginas coloridas e Preto e Branco para o miolo de cada capítulo; já o exemplar final foi impresso digitalmente em 4 cores (CMYK), por se tratar de uma baixa tiragem.

4. CONCLUSÃO

“O design de um livro é diferente de todos os outros tipos de design gráfico”, afirma Richard Hendel (2006), acrescentando que o trabalho real de um designer de livro é “descobrir como colocar uma letra ao lado da outra de modo que as palavras do autor pareçam saltar da página”. Pude comprovar essa frase no projeto aqui apresentado, não só por que em certos momentos as palavras literalmente pareciam saltar da página - ou correr, derreter e voar-, mas também por que, durante essa experiência, me vi constantemente à serviço do texto, das palavras e das letras.

No início desse projeto, tinha muito claro em mim o meu desejo de expressar os arquétipos pelos quais tenho tanto interesse, porém foi ao longo da execução que me dei conta da real dimensão do projeto que desenvolvia. Ao se iniciar um processo de design, existe a tendência de se visualizar, de antemão, com o quê o produto se parecerá quando pronto; porém, por mais concreta que possa ser essa visualização, de nada ela serve se não há o cuidado do designer em zelar pela função do produto. Em minha opinião, se não há auto-realização do propósito de um projeto, não há design. Assim como uma lâmpada deve iluminar, por mais interessante e desconstruída que seja a sua forma, um livro deve ser lido.

Foi com essa compreensão que desenvolvi esse projeto; entendendo que por mais interessante que fosse um efeito ou estilo, ele não deveria impedir a leitura, e assim diversas decisões e ideias interessantes foram descartadas, de modo que toda intervenção agregasse à experiência de leitura. Somente quando os princípios de um bom livro foram estabelecidos é que os arquétipos puderam ganhar vida através das distorções, decorações e composições. Ao mesmo tempo, testar a capacidade que o design gráfico tem de sugerir sensações, ideias, contextos e emoções, trouxe vida, criatividade e envolvimento para a execução do projeto, principalmente através de ferramentas como os painéis visuais.

Através da metodologia e das ferramentas aplicadas, entendi as complexidades da proposta, solucionei momentos de bloqueio, e me tornei mais apto a criar, e dessa maneira o livro foi sendo desenvolvido, como uma imagem que ganhou nitidez e foi se tornando, ao mesmo tempo, mais clara e mais complexa. Quando comparado com essa primeira imagem borrada, o resultado final desse projeto em nada se parece com a ideia que eu havia projetado; ele é melhor, por que ao contrário das inúmeras ideias mirabolantes, ele funciona, e existe.

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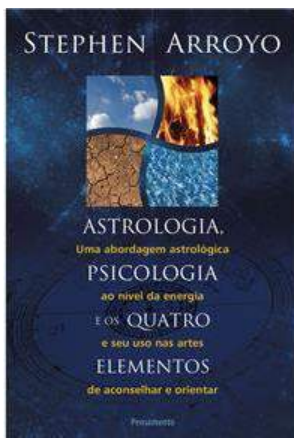
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APÊNDICE A – FICHAS DE AVALIAÇÃO DE SIMILARES



Stephen Arroyo - Astrologia, Psicologia e os Quatro Elementos

Tipografia

2 fontes, ambas de texto, uma serifada e uma sans.

A fonte sans é usada somente na capa e contra-capas. A fonte serifada é usada em negrito e maiúsculas para aberturas de capítulos, negrito para títulos de seção, regular para o texto e itálico para citações e subseções.

Imagens

O livro não tem imagens

Editorial

O livro tem os seguintes elementos editoriais: título de seção, tabelas e citação.

As margens, entrelinhas e espaçamentos são satisfatórias, bem como o tamanho da coluna. A fonte de texto é excessivamente fina, gerando pouco contraste.

Produção gráfica

Papel branco sulfite, gramatura 75

Tamanho padrão (20,5cm x 14cm)

Lombada quadrada, capa com orelha em couché brilho de gramatura alta

Não tem efeitos gráficos

Conteúdo

O livro é dividido em 2 partes, cada parte é dividida em seções e subseções; O texto é disposto em grandes blocos, criando um acúmulo de páginas de texto corrido.



Mainá Mello - Encontros Astrais

Tipografia

4 fontes, uma caligráfica display (letterings), uma sans geométrica, uma serifada de texto e uma sans de texto.

Os letterings são usados na capa e nas aberturas de capítulo. A fonte geométrica é usada em negrito e maiúsculas, em títulos de seção e informações adicionais. A fonte serifada é usada no texto. A fonte sans de texto é usada em boxes e legendas.

Imagens

São usadas imagens abstratas nos fundos das aberturas de capítulo, são formas geométricas irregulares e descontraídas traçadas a giz. Também são usadas imagens representativas em um capítulo em que cada signo é ilustrado com sua constelação.

Editorial

O livro contém aberturas de capítulo, capitulares, títulos de seção e boxes.

Margens, espacejamento e entrelinhas confortáveis, bem como tamanho da letra, tamanho de coluna satisfatório.

As imagens não interagem com o texto

Produção gráfica

Papel pólen soft amarelado, gramatura 90

Tamanho padrão (20,5cm x 14cm)

Lombada quadrada, capa com orelha em couché fosco de gramatura alta

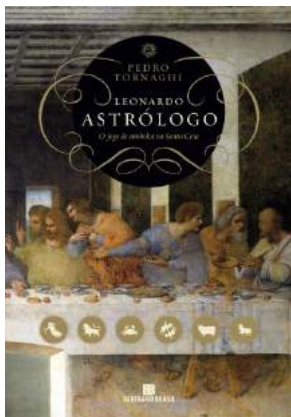
Tem verniz aplicado e cor especial

Conteúdo

O conteúdo é bem dividido, sem ser excessivamente fragmentado. O maior volume de texto corrido é de 6 páginas, que são os textos introdutórios de cada capítulo, depois se divide em seções menores explorando cada signo.

Particularidades

O livro é todo impresso em tons de roxo.



Pedro Tornaghi - Leonardo Astrólogo: o Jogo de Símbolos na Santa Ceia

Tipografia

1 fonte, serifada de texto.

A fonte é usada em maiúsculas e colorida para o título do capítulo e subtítulos, em regular para o texto e em itálico para citações.

Imagens

O livro é ilustrado com recortes da santa ceia de Leonardo da Vinci, pictogramas de cada signo são usados como guia de capítulo e a representação de um sol decora o fôlio, também

tem arabescos abstratos decorando o guia. São imagens refinadas e de tom sério, remetendo ao um classicismo típico do renascimento.

Editorial

O livro tem dois guias (um textual no canto da página, e um ilustrativo na lateral), fôlio decorado, citações e abertura de capítulo ilustrada.

As margens são largas, criando uma largura de coluna ideal e uma boa área de respiro, o que é muito bom considerando o volume de texto em cada capítulo (entre 30 e 50 páginas). Espacejamento e entrelinhas confortáveis. Letra relativamente pequena, mas ainda bem legível pelo contraste.

Produção gráfica

Papel offset marfim, gramatura 90

Tamanho padrão, ligeiramente mais largo (20,5cm x 14,5 cm)

Lombada quadrada, capa com orelha em couché fosco de gramatura alta

Tem verniz aplicado

Conteúdo

O conteúdo é extenso, os textos têm entre 30 a 50 páginas, mas são divididos em partes menores, de 5 a 6 páginas, separadas por subtítulos.

Particularidades

Uso muito inteligente dos elementos editoriais, cada capítulo começa com uma citação, e o guia ilustrado desce na lateral da página à medida que os capítulos avançam, reforça a localização.

O livro acompanha um pôster destacável da santa ceia, e no verso do pôster há um infográfico que traz uma análise da posição das mãos de cada discípulo na pintura.



Claudia Lisboa - Os astros sempre nos acompanham: Um manual de astrologia contemporânea

Tipografia

2 fontes. Uma serifada de texto e uma sans condensada de texto.

A fonte sans é usada em negrito para títulos e em regular para informações extras. A fonte serifada é usada para o texto, em itálico para citações.

Imagens

Os capítulos são abertos com imagens geométricas abstratas, de tom minimalista, que remetem a aspectos astrológicos. No último capítulo o livro traz algumas imagens técnicas representativas explicando a dinâmica do céu.

Editorial

O livro tem guia no topo da página, citações e notas de rodapé.

Margens, entrelinhas e espaçamentos satisfatórios. Letra relativamente pequena mas de tamanho bom. A coluna é significativamente maior do que o recomendado.

As imagens não interagem com o texto

Produção gráfica

Papel offset amarelado, gramatura 75

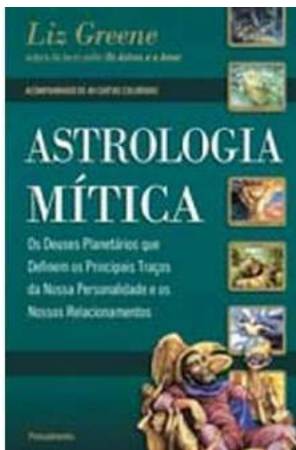
Tamanho padrão (20,5cm x 14cm)

Lombada quadrada, capa com orelha em couché brilho de gramatura alta

Tem cor especial na parte interna da capa

Conteúdo

Conteúdo extenso, com média de 4 a 6 páginas de texto corrido, mas frequentemente conta com seções menores, de meia página de texto.



Liz Greene - Astrologia Mítica

Tipografia

2 fontes. Uma sans de texto, de referência art nouveau, e uma serifada de texto.

A fonte sans é usada em títulos de capítulos. A fonte serifada é usada para o texto, em itálico nas citações e legendas, e em negrito e maiúsculas na capa do livro.

Imagens

Traz foto representativas de estátuas, peças ou pinturas históricas, além de uma ilustração criada para cada signo e planeta.

Editorial

O livro tem títulos de seção, capitulares, tabelas, legendas e boxes.

Entrelinha e espacejamento bons, tamanho de letra bom, mas relativamente pequeno, e margem fina, resultando em uma coluna maior que o recomendado. Não há recuo de parágrafo.

As imagens interagem com o texto na primeira página, deformando a coluna em um recorte quadrado ou redondo.

Produção gráfica

Papel branco, gramatura muito fina (60?)

Tamanho padrão (20,5 cm x 14cm)

Lombada quadrada, capa sem orelha em couché brilho de gramatura alta

Não tem efeitos gráficos

Conteúdo

Conteúdo corrido na maior parte, média de 4 páginas. Na última parte do livro o texto é dividido em seções curtas, de um parágrafo.

Particularidades

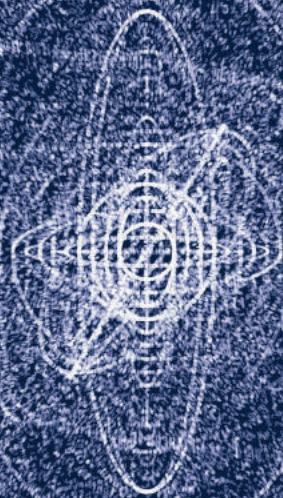
Foram encontradas inconsistências na organização gráfica.

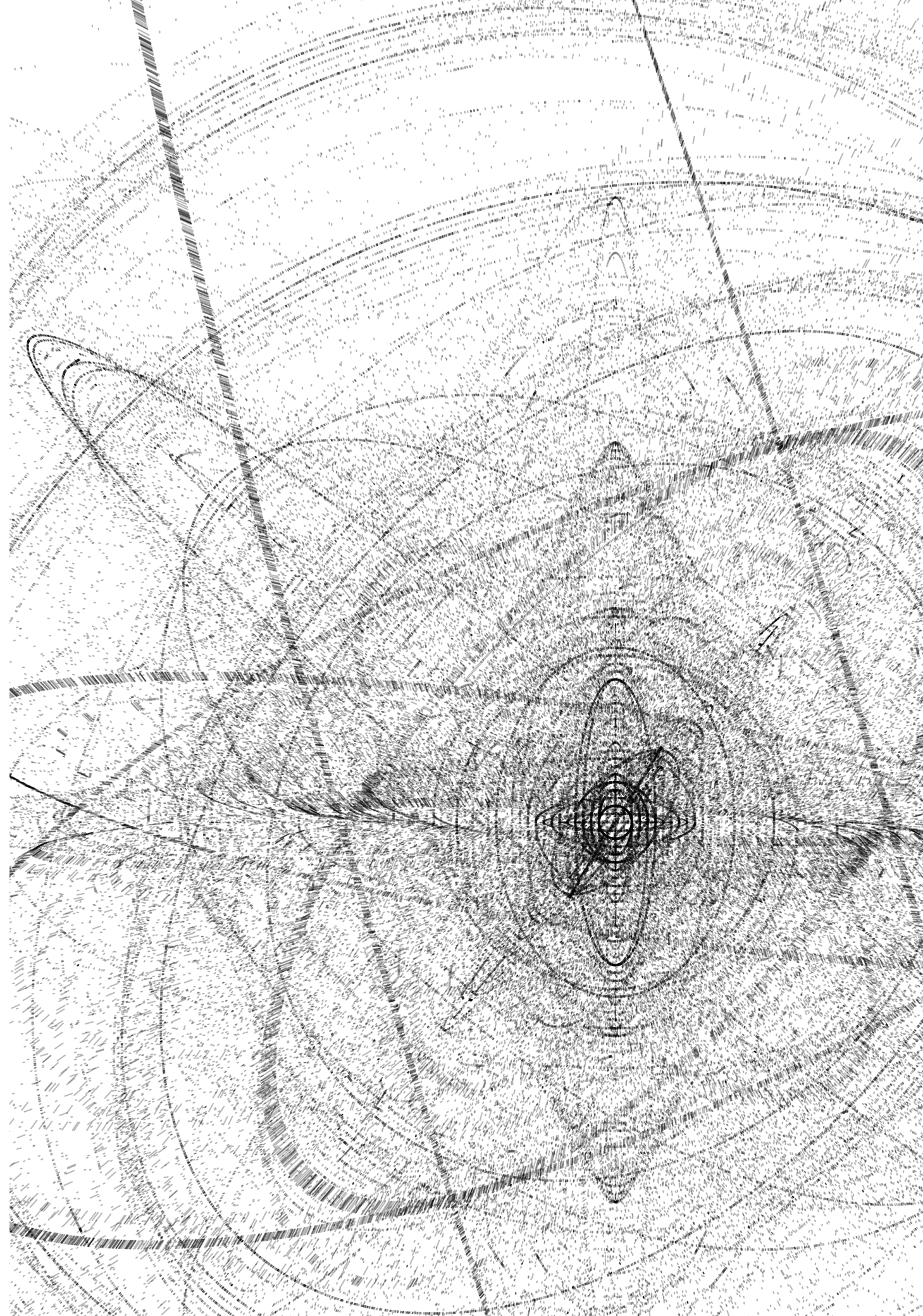
O livro acompanha um jogo de cartas, em que cada carta traz uma ilustração para cada signo ou planeta.

APÊNDICE B – LIVRO COMPLETO

THE SIGNS AND HERCULES' TWELVE LABORS

Dana Gerhardt





Este livro foi criado por João Gabriel Oliveira como o produto final do Projeto de Conclusão de Curso do curso de Design da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, como projeto acadêmico, sem fins lucrativos. O projeto foi orientado pela Prof^a Dr.^a Mary Meürer e avaliado por Luciano Castro e Sharlene Melanie, no primeiro semestre de 2017. O portfólio online de João Gabriel Oliveira está em behance.net/guamrs.

A capa do livro é uma arte criada por João Pedro Fernandes Borges, usando um programa autoral criado no Processing, especialmente para esse livro. Seu trabalho está em behance.net/jpfbacon.

Os textos que compõem esse livro foram escritos por Dana Gerhardt, para o site astro.com, e publicados como uma coleção de artigos chamados "The Signs and Hercules' Twelve Labors". A autora concedeu a autorização para esse projeto.

O livro foi inteiramente diagramado com a família Mrs. Eaves.

As fontes das imagens, vetores e clip arts constam no relatório do projeto.

Para a execução desse projeto, umas série de painéis conceituais foi criada, estes painéis se encontram em pinterest.com/guamrs.

*Dedico esse projeto à Dana Gerhardt, a autora do livro.
Ler seus textos me trouxe alegria e apoio em momentos de
confusão, e me ajudou a reecontrar o interesse na leitura, no
design, e na experiência humana. Eu não estou nem exagerando.
Obrigado por dividir conosco sua compreensão desse fino tecido
que envolve a existência.*

*I dedicate this project to Dana Gerhardt, the author of this book.
Reading your articles gave joy and support in times of
confusion, and helped me to regain interest in reading, design,
and the human experience. I am not even exaggerating.
Thank you for sharing with us your understanding of this thin
fabric that permeates existence.*

THE SIGNS AND HERCULES' TWELVE LABORS

Dana Gerhardt

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ARIES





Imagine the way those horses came plunging and foaming like a race undammed, and how the hot hooves crashing scoured down the hills of Thrace. Fed by an unheard-of hunger.¹

For his Aries labor, Hercules must capture and tame four savage horses, gifts from Mars to his half-mortal son, the barbaric King Diomedes. His unruly steeds tear across Thrace like earthquakes and thunder, splintering cities, devouring rivers, and razing mountains. Among terrified Thracians it's rumored that the mares even eat human flesh.

Experience in archetypes tells me the horses must symbolize the raw vitality of Aries, but the dark fury of this image gives me pause. Despite a few hot-headed Arians I've known (who were rather scary), I generally conjure sunnier pictures of this sign. Aries is the leap of joy, the charge up the hill, the flushed cheeks of exertion and laughter. It's the urge to be the first, to shout "Aiyeee!" to grab a lover and wrestle in the sheets. It's the crack of the bat as an all-star hits a homerun. It's the toddler exclaiming "I did it!" as a new milestone is achieved. It's the explorer heading without a map into an amazing adventure.

Zero Aries, that point when the north-climbing Sun crosses the equator, marks the beginning of the tropical zodiac and launches spring in the Northern Hemisphere. It brings warmer days, renewed vitality, new growth and new optimism. Where Aries appears in your chart, you have a gift for beginnings, for blazing new trails, for leaping where spirit wants to take you. Aries is sheer life force energy. That's one of the meanings of its glyph: a single line branching into two ram horns.

Meditate on this image and you'll discover its essence all around you. Sit in presence with a simple house plant, for example. After you've relaxed enough to perceive what's there, you'll notice the bright life force energy that holds the stalk upright, that blazes out into space through its branches, reaching, exploring, pursuing the light. In your own body, with practice, you can find a fountain of electricity running up your spine, branching like the ram's horns, over your crown. This is the Aries glyph inside you, holding the bright charge of *"I am!"*

Zero Aries is also an angle in the world's horoscope. Without an actual birth time, the world has no real birth chart. Yet zero degrees of cardinal signs have proven to be sensitive points; transits here signal major cultural shifts, accelerating a tide of global events. When zero Aries is active in an individual's chart, by midpoint or planetary aspect, it can bring a significant connection with the larger world, perhaps increasing one's prominence or merging one's fate with the currents of history. Zero Aries is especially important these days, as three of four outer planets stalk this degree. Pluto in Capricorn has just squared it*, Saturn in Libra will oppose it*, and Uranus in Pisces is heading to conjunct it*. What might these transits provoke from the Aries point? Will they inspire new beginnings? Ignite a new adventure? Or unleash the savage mares of Diomedes?

Alas. We can usually count on the world to display a transit's lowest potentials. When Pluto made its final square to the Aries point last November*, King Diomedes and his man-eating mares took the stage. With stunning audacity, a team of terrorists brought mayhem and death to the streets of Mumbai, firing indiscriminately from waist-high AK-47s across crowded hotels, cafes, theaters, and railway stations. The siege lasted days. At the same time, half a world away, a Wal-Mart employee was trampled by Black Friday shoppers in a stampede for cheap electronics. Jdimytai Damour – described by friends as a lover of family and poetry – was killed at the Green Acres Mall when a waiting crowd became a mob, shoving and

pounding on the store doors until they shattered. Pluto transits point with laser focus to what most needs purging and transformation. In this case it was Aries' dark side – its self-centered ruthlessness, brutality and greed – the shadow traits Aries doesn't like exposed in itself.

Few of us with Aries planets have shadows this ruthless or violent, but most of us are hiding a few dark traits. Now is an excellent time to explore any unconscious Aries behaviors, as Pluto, Saturn, and Uranus will keep triggering Aries degrees in the years ahead. Outer planet transits have a nasty habit of bringing what's unconscious to the surface. This is a celestial kindness – an opportunity to recognize old wounds and heal them, to unbind defenses

and more fully express our greater divinity. But the road to healing is often bumpy by transit. So it's worth anticipating: How does Aries's sunny vitality ever veer into mayhem? What brings the inner Diomedes to life?

The Gift and Curse of Mars

An Aries friend once told me: *"The thing you've got to know about people is that underneath the surface, everybody wants to beat the crap out of somebody."* I was startled. Nick is a Buddhist. And though we quickly arrived at the same conclusion, that everyone needs our compassion, it was a glimpse into the gritty, contentious world that Nick sometimes sees through his Aries eyes.

Nick is a daily meditator. But his spiritual practice can quickly unravel when a yoga class or parking lot – that appears calm to me – suddenly erupts for him with threats, competition and high-risk demands. Aries' ruling planet is the god of war. Mars lives on a battlefield, and so, it often seems, does my Aries friend. If planets aren't mere glyphs on paper or just rocky/gassy orbs in space, if they are symbols of the very gods breathing into us, then perhaps Nick is the way he is because Mars keeps whispering instructions into his psyche and sharpening swords in his dreams. Mars is a warrior, courageous, strong and fired-up. In the heat of battle, he moves intuitively, subjectively, like a wild fire through a forest. His passions come quickly and can disappear just as fast. He's a brute, impetuous, impatient, and driven by desires. Besting foes and pursuing lovers are the needs that keep his world both exciting and dangerous. His sword and shield are never far from his hands.

Hercules must enter this Mars-ruled world to complete his Aries labor. King Eurystheus wants the destructive mares of Diomedes stopped in their tracks. This could take an army, but Hercules gathers a gang of hot-heads like himself, ready for anything. They dash to their boats and set sail for Thrace. Boldly they rush the beach where, in a surprising early victory, they overwhelm the stable grooms and capture the horses. It's almost too easy – until King Diomedes gets the news. A real Daddy's boy, the son of Mars has a wrathful temper and an impressive army. Hercules readies himself to meet it. He tosses the mares' reins to his young squire Admetos and drives into the middle of the fray. The battle is brutal, bloody, hard; several times the upper hand turns. In the end, Hercules is victorious. The barbaric king is dead. Returning to his boats, Hercules discovers the mares have vanished and Admetos is dead, torn and trampled by the savage beasts. Hercules goes after them and in a fury of clubbing, subdues all four. Back at the boats, he feeds them the flesh of their former master. Eating Diomedes is what finally makes them tame.

It's often said that Aries is spoiling for a fight. Perhaps a truer statement is that Aries is simply fulfilling its mission to master its own fighting spirit, the gift and curse of Mars. I've battled a few Arians over the years, among them Georgette, a department manager from my corporate days. I'd been hired

as a consultant to improve her group's performance. She was new at the job and upper management wanted to accelerate her learning curve. Advising an Aries about anything isn't easy, but I was eager to support her in building her group's success. Overnight the department became a war zone, ablaze with glares, whispers, and private meetings. Employees were afraid to be seen with me. Georgette was walling me out. Her campaign lasted six weeks. Each day I showed up, sat in a cubicle adjacent to hers and doodled for my hourly fee, until one day she announced that she was leaving the corporate world to become a teacher. Within an hour of her resignation, I had her job at twice my consultant's pay.

I had won by doing little, something an Aries may find hard to understand. Aries is action-oriented. It's a doer, and often enough, it can do itself in. Though Georgette had made my life difficult, I remember her fondly, with admiration even. I can still see her ruddy cheeks, alternately laughing and furious. She was tall and strong, like an athlete. If an earthquake had struck the building, I would have been glad to have her around. Even so, there was something so vulnerable in her eyes. She looked like a child playing at being an adult, and doing it bravely. She'd stepped into a job she'd known nothing about and left it for yet another new challenge. Georgette was unafraid to launch herself again and again. But the heart she wore on her sleeve made her fear danger where it didn't exist. She was quick to thrust, parry, attack and defend. It was her innocence that did it. The secret truth about Aries is that it gets deeply and easily hurt.

This makes Arians both lovable and maddening. The bright vitality that fuels their adventures can also, like the savage mares tearing across Thrace, send their worlds into chaos. Encounters with Arians are often ones that people need to talk about. *"Paula is fun, but you know, whenever you're with her, it's all about her."* *"Bob just ran over me and didn't listen to a word I said."*

"You can't win with Cathy; you either give in or run for cover." When struggling with an Arian, it's important to realize her biggest fight may actually be with herself. The battle between Hercules and Diomedes represents an inner struggle – between the daring hero who wants to save and dazzle the world and the spoiled

child who wants to punish it for her pain. The mares eating their former master describes the Arian gaining control over her own ego and its sometimes clumsy passions – the raw energy, restlessness, and resentment that results from innocence bruised.

Not all Aries assaults are intentional. Susan works at an investment firm with an Aries boss. She tells me he's forever butting into her private conversations. He stands too close. He ignores her gentle but persistent signals to stay away. She'll shut her office door and he'll open it without knocking, poking his head in, just to see what's going on. He's friendly enough, she tells me, always smiling or expressing concern, yet she feels harassed and violated. Initially she worried he was coming on to her until she realized that he treats everyone the same way. Still, she finds herself burning up with frustration. He's her boss and she doesn't know what to do.

Astrology is helpful in such instances. Like a naturalist's field guide, it can tell us who we'll meet on the human landscape and how to behave in return. Despite our awareness that not everyone is just like us, we're generally shocked to discover this truth again and again. The zodiac can help us identify particular styles and learn how to work with them more effectively.

Eventually, we may discover we're not so different after all. We too have a Mars and one or more Aries houses. The dynamic personality of Arians is an especially shiny surface; it often reflects back those traits we can't see in ourselves.

I discussed the Aries style with Susan using its symbol, the ram. The ram's horns take it bravely where others fear to tread, and also where it shouldn't be treading at all. Dynamic, motivated, and energized, the ram can be like a tank, contained, self-involved and socially obtuse. Few of us grew up observing real rams on neighborhood hills, but encounters with the human variety generally teach it's unwise to meet them head-on.

Jousting with an Aries requires more creative strategies.

Two of my best friends have Mercury in Aries. Our talks can be lively, wide-ranging, stimulating and aggravating. Mercury in Aries has a quick, agile mind that tends to talk more than it listens. One friend is forever racing ahead of me, finishing subjects and starting new ones before I have a chance to respond. The other disagrees with nearly every suggestion I make—at first—until she has a chance to reach

the same conclusion herself. I wasn't thinking about their charts. I just became impatient and contentious. Sometimes I'd confront my Mercury-in-Aries friends, which rendered

them shocked, hurt, then silent and fuming. Can you see how I was enacting Aries' shadow-becoming angry and self-absorbed myself?! I needed to shift my point of view. When I genuinely accepted how the Aries mind needs to think and speak, I could relax, even delight in the play of their chatter.

Paradoxically, this opened up more room for both of us in the conversation. When Susan thought about how she'd been reacting to her boss, she realized that she had been meeting him with aggression of her own. Once she accepted his clumsy attempts to connect, she could relax and dance with this ram more artfully.

Egyptians named the ram in Aries' constellation "Amen-

Ra." A potent solar god, Amen-Ra was responsible for regenerating the sacred year. He was called "*the Ram, the virile male, the holy phallus, which stirreth up the passions of love, the Ram of rams.*"² The Assyrians named this same cluster of stars "Lu-Hun-Ga," referring to the day laborers hired to work the date groves during pollination season. Wind once pollinated the palm, but not in human memory, so it became the all-important job of these early cultivators to take pollen from the grove's one male tree and hand germinate each female palm, just when its blossoms opened.³ This potent, fructifying mission is still integral to Aries' calling. I've known a few Arians who can move like the wind!

They're energizers; they make things happen. I recall a business meeting years ago, led by a man with Sun, Moon and Venus in Aries. Leaning forward at the table, he said "*I'm all for going with the flow, but sometimes you've got to push the flow along!*"

Aries is the revitalizing force of nature. This gives us good motivation to work with it creatively, whether we meet its raw force in ourselves or others. If we allow Aries' sometimes aggression to run free rather than blocking it, we may find it leads us into new directions, toward more fruitful destinations. Yet many of us fail to actualize this bright potential in our Aries houses or planets.

This indicates yet another corner in Aries' shadow territory – the one where our risk-taking trailblazer wears concrete boots. Why would we want to immobilize our own ram?

Aries'

Among the Greeks, the ram
of the Aries constellation was
golden and winged, its fleece

Sacrifice

the well-known quarry of Ja-
son's quest. Before that, the
ram had its own famous adven-
ture, involving the children

of a Boeotian king. Their stepmother was planning
to have them killed. In a bold and daring rescue, the

ram plucked the children from danger, but while
flying across the Dardanelles, the girl Helle lost her
balance. She fell off the ram's back and drowned.

The ram kept going until he brought the boy Phrixus safely
to the Black Sea shore.

The winged ram is not a television super hero, capable
of brazen rescues that are both safe and successful. The
ram's ride is rough and ragged, his heroism tinged with

recklessness. I am reminded of the death of poor Admetos in
Hercules' Aries labor. Sacrifice is a common motif in Aries
adventures. When Phrixus reaches safety, as gratitude he of-
fers the ram in holy sacrifice. He kills the beast and hangs its

golden fleece in an oak grove guarded by a dragon and
dedicated to the war-god Ares (or Mars). Some thanks!

The ram has been perhaps the most sacrificed animal in sac-
red history. It was a ram who exchanged places with Isaac,
the son Abraham was instructed to kill.

Such is the price of its potency. The ram is
meant to drive forward with courage - and

be offered - not sheltered, stroked, or loved. With such a fate
as reward, it's not surprising many of us instinctively restrain
our rams. We may burn for a new adventure, but quickly shut it

down with fear or self-doubt. We wonder what others
will think of us if we fail. We've seen how those who
charge ahead often end up: lonely and unappreciat-

ed. In truth, our admiration of Aries courage is
more theory than fact. We send Arians forward to
blaze our trails, yet even when we follow their lead,

we don't always treasure their companionship. But
the world needs its rams. Remembering both the

trauma and heroism of World War II, poet Louis
Simpson honors a figure who is the embodiment of

Aries energy: *"For the essential human virtue, courage, without
which there is no other, I give you 'point,' the man walking up the road
ahead of the company, his rifle held across his body at port arms."*⁴

Hercules succeeds in his Aries labor. But Admetos
is dead. This is an important element in
the story. We can read Admetos as Aries'
vulnerability - the innocent child in a role

too big, getting sacrificed again and again.

We can also read Admetos as evidence of Ar-
ies' wobbly leadership. Aries may fail to adequately
size up its fellows. It can presume support where it
doesn't exist. Aries tends to project itself outward:

"If I can do it, so can you!" In the "You/Me" polarity of
Libra and Aries, Libra knows others and often loses
itself, while Aries knows itself but loses others. In

situations rife with complexity and nuance, Aries
is sometimes stalking itself in a house of mirrors.

Admetos' death could have been foreseen and
prevented, but Aries tends to leap without look-
ing too far ahead. In her delightful old book,

What's Wrong with Your Sun Sign?, Barbara Wat-
ters identifies *"lack of foresight"* as the fatal Ar-
ies flaw. As proof she offers the Arian whose

checking account is always overdrawn, the
Arian who runs out of gas in the middle of
the desert, and the Arian who sets sail after

storm warnings have been posted up and down the coast.

*"(Aries is) a great one for trying experiments that are apt to blow his head
off,"* writes Watters, *"like pouring a can of gasoline in the fireplace to
jazz up a reluctant fire, or washing down a tumbler full of Jameson's Twelve*

Year Old with a vodka chaser." Aries is not one for de-
tails. Like other fire signs, its understanding of
the balance sheet of assets and liabilities is often

sketchy. Writes Watters, *"(The Arian will) wangle thirty
thousand dollars worth of mortgages on a twenty thousand dol-*

*lar house, then use the extra ten thousand to buy a boat, two cars,
a mink coat for his wife, and a trip around the world, all on time."*⁵

We can try to shake the shoulders of
 our Aries loved ones so they hear us. But
 ultimately we have to respect the solo nature
 of their journey. The dead Admetos is a cau-
 tionary image: Hercules should have kept
 his own hands on the mares' reins. An
 Aries hero must work alone. The war-
 rior's life requires valor and isolation.
 One of my clients hated this about
 her Aries husband. *"In the weeks before his
 company's annual sales meetings," she complained,
 "he acts like the kids and I don't even exist. A wall goes
 up and he becomes very selfish. I know he's prepar-
 ing and I'd like to help. He doesn't have to be so cold."*
 I suggested his behavior was not a rejec-
 tion, but the logical conduct of an Aries
 warrior. His preparation required a fo-
 cused withdrawal. He sacrificed himself,
 so he could throw himself more effec-
 tively into the fray. *"Well," she acknowl-
 edged, "when the battle is over, he always returns."*
 A smile came to her lips. I took it to mean
 that without her sometimes aggravating
 Arian, her world wouldn't be nearly as fun.

Notes

- 1 . Deborah Warren, "Hercules' Eighth Labor: The Man-Eating Mares of Diomedes," *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life*, (March, 2003).
 - 2 . quoted from G.E. Budge in Barbara G. Walker, *The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets*, (HarperCollins), 1983, p. 841.
 - 3 . Dr. E.C. Krupp, *Beyond the Blue Horizon*, (HarperCollins, 1991),
 - 4 . p. 272.
 - 5 . Louis Simpson, "Soldier's Heart," *The Best American Essays 1998*, edited Cynthia Ozick and Robert Atwan, (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998),
 - 6 . p. 214-15.
 - 7 . Barbara H. Watters, *What's Wrong with Your Sun Sign?*, (Valhalla Paperbacks, 1970), pp. 5-6.
- * Editor's Note: Pluto in Capricorn has squared Zero Aries in 2008, Saturn in Libra op-posed it in 2009/2010, and Uranus in Pisces conjuncted it in 2010/2011.

TAURUS

RIDING THE BULL

Imagine you didn't recite the names of the months in kindergarten; instead you learned about the year through the sky, watching the morning stars rise.

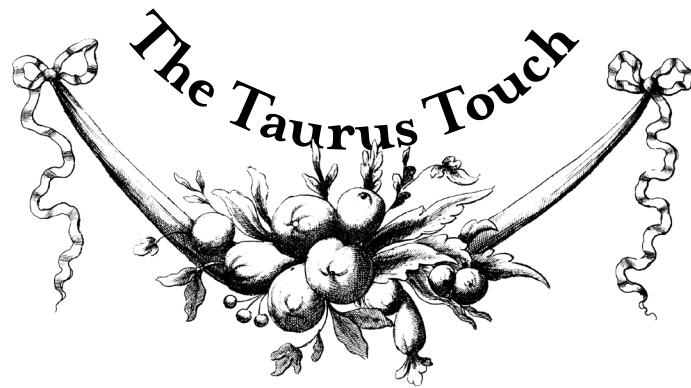
When Aldeberan appeared – the brightest star in the Taurus constellation – you knew at six you would finally get your bicycle. When Rigel arrived one moon later, your mother would gather sweet berries and bake them into a pie. At summer's peak, you'd stay up late, watching the moon grow bigger, brightening all the rooftops in the neighborhood. You were sad to see the waning crescent. It meant Sirius would soon be rising and school would be starting again.

Imagine you still watch the sky, waiting each year for Aldebaran, the left eye of the Taurus Bull. You love how it ushers in an abundance of strawberries and watermelon at the supermarket. You watch the moon's cycle and make a promise to yourself. You'll fast on watermelon juice for the three days of the dark moon and be clear and strong by the time Rigel appears. Of course you wouldn't think of going a single morning or night without looking skyward.

Imagine: kinder than the clock and more reliable than your iPhone, the stars, honoring your life as you honor them. In every house in your neighborhood, there's a row of eastern-facing windows. And eastern-most window of your home, before dawn in your daughter's bedroom, Sirius will appear one late-summer morning, announcing it's time to shop for a new backpack and new-school-year clothes.

Of course that's not how we live today. Concentrated on small electronic devices in our palms, we look down more than up. I imagine explaining this to an ancestor, one who consulted the sky as regularly as I do my BlackBerry. *"Oh ancestor, I need neither the seasons nor the moon. I vary neither my work nor my diet with the sun. I can travel in one day by car as far as you traveled in three moons by foot. I have a house big enough to shelter a small village, though there are only three of us. And we are as warm in winter as our energy bill is high."*

"No sun, no moon, no stars?" There is a look of confusion on my ancestor's face, a sea of thoughts that churn until out comes a single question: *"But then, who do you praise and pray to?"*



From 4000 BC until 1700 BC, the constellation of the Taurus Bull rose at the vernal equinox. Heraldng spring's rebirth, sacred bulls and cows appear in mythologies throughout the ancient world, their images found in temples and cave paintings, on jewelry, bowls, and coins. Our ancestors followed the stars. They gathered food from the land and listened for messages from the gods. They could embrace three virtues in a single gesture, binding together what's practical, natural, and mystical. Today we separate these things and synchronize our lives to the efficient rhythms of machines. Though we are busy and fast, our streets show plenty of rage and sorrow. Clearly something in us remains unsatisfied, longing to weave spirit, earth and sky into our daily lives again. Such wholeness is the gift that Taurus can offer us. But how do we redeem to it? Maybe Hercules will show us how.

For his Taurus labor, Hercules must (not surprisingly) capture a bull. For reasons we'll later explore, Poseidon has driven the Cretan Bull mad. It's broken free from King Minos' herd and is now rampaging through the countryside. Following King Eurytheus' command, Hercules heads to Crete, locates the handsome animal, ropes it, then rides it back to Eurytheus, who orders it released again into the wild, where it wreaks havoc for a few more years until Theseus finally slays it.

What a strange story! Hercules typically goes to the ends of the earth for his labors, losing men and sometimes heart along the way. Summoning superhuman

wit and strength, he faces formidable foes, finds magical objects, reshapes the land, and wrestles with gods. His Taurus mission has none of this drama. Crete is nearby. The Bull submits easily. The ride back is uneventful. And once the labor is done, the Bull goes back to doing what it did before, until another hero arrives to complete the tale.

If it's true there were originally only ten labors instead of twelve, C. Kerényi suggests this is surely one of the later additions.¹ But investigating the story's legitimacy is not our purpose. In matching labors to zodiac signs, we follow a more recent tradition, taking our cue from Alice Bailey, one of several Theosophists who helped shape the way we practice astrology today. So we'll accept Bailey's schema² and endeavor to understand this labor's message, possibly finding in its very ease an important Taurus teaching.

Although the plot is uneventful, we could say that Hercules does perform super-humanly in this tale, as he has no difficulties whatsoever! Real life is never this easy, but perhaps it's the goal of Taurus to make it so. Hercules finds his target without delay, subdues the beast without struggle, and patiently rides it home. We like our heroes to charge out, wield clubs, and dominate their opponents, but those are masculine values and Taurus is a feminine sign. Its goals are simplicity, security, and peace. Its virtues include receptivity and acceptance. Hercules is a



follower in this labor. He follows the signs to reach the animal's location, senses the temperament of the beast, and after soothing its insanity, gently leads it on. Hercules doesn't even protest when the King says "*Release the Bull*," as though his laboring were all for nothing. Hercules simply steps aside so that Destiny (and another hero) can take over.

For his Taurus mission, Hercules renegotiates what's heroic to include more feminine values. Many moderns who've lost touch with earth and sky have also disconnected from the potency of the divine feminine. As Robert Hand suggests, our culture tends to revere the active masculine and denigrate the passive feminine, not fully understanding its role - and the role of Taurus - as matrices for creative manifestation.³ Taurus is the container that allows energy to manifest on the physical plane; it draws the creative spark of Aries into form. Its actions are feminine: it submits instead of subdues, it would rather belong than fight, it favors nurturing over destruction. It harmonizes with the greater whole. It can also be fierce and protective when necessary. Just as the divine feminine can rage and pout, so can the Taurus Bull steam, stamp and charge to protect its peace. Bulls, of course, are masculine; but we shouldn't forget the Taurus Bull is ruled by Venus and so takes its orders from the feminine.

Each zodiac sign corrects the excesses of its preceding sign, and Taurus is no exception. Notes Robert Hand: "*Taurus is the remedy for almost all of Aries's deficiencies.*"⁴



Aries' energy is initiating and courageous, also excitable, erratic and scattered; it's fiery, harsh, and as gardeners know, the Moon in this sign is sterile. In contrast, Taurus is cool, soft, and fertile; it's stable, persistent, and can concentrate its energies toward growth. Without Aries there would be no seeds; without Taurus there would be no gardens.

Taurus is most at home in the physical world. So perhaps the most appropriate way to enter this sign is through physical sensation. Imagine being Hercules touching the flank of the Cretan Bull. Can you experience Taurus' keywords as actual sensations? Feel the stability, loyalty, and patience of the Bull, its sensuality and grass-eating indulgence. Perhaps you can sense a temper too, the capacity to charge or dig hooves in the ground. Depending on the day, you might feel a distinctly lazy energy, habit-loving and slow, also beauty-loving and grateful for the natural world. Imagine climbing onto this beast and riding it just as Hercules did, going slowly and steadily towards your goal. Can you sense how to ride like this through the conditions of your Taurus house - among your friends if Taurus is in your 11th, at your daily workplace if Taurus is in your 6th, with your partner if Taurus rules your 7th? Does the bull's slow pace and sensual indulgence feel comfortable or irritating here? Are you at home in this house - like Ferdinand eating flowers in sweet pasture? Or do you feel like a bull in a china shop, knocking plates off shelves with your horns?



The Bull is a useful metaphor for Taurus, but few of us live around real ones today. Even so, there are plenty opportunities to sense and touch this sign. Take yourself to Taurus environs: into lush gardens, art galleries, banks and stock brokerages, around trees, on carpets, in cellars, surrounded by your possessions, near copper or cows. Sense what invisibly draws these places and objects into existence. Allow this field to permeate you. Whenever possible, touch Taurus objects with deep attention: rings, floors, precious stones, your checkbook, musical instruments, lilies, your wallet, moss. Make it a practice to listen for the sounds of Taurus: a chorus in song, the ring of a cash register, a grunting pig. Become aware of the Taurus-ruled parts of your body: the base of your skull, your bottom teeth, lower lip, chin, your jaw, ears, and throat. Soundlessly, connect to the source of your voice.

How do planets feel in Taurus? Imagine Mercury, Saturn, or Venus meeting its fixed, earthy, and receptive qualities. Imagine being in this sign as each archetype. It might feel like being held in the trunk of a tree, holding still as a tree, your arms warmed by the sun, your leaves stroked by the wind, the sky opened wide for your branches. You're anchored; you can hold so much—ants, birds, spiders, and squirrels. What does it feel like to be committed to one spot forever? Does swift-moving Mercury enjoy this? How about pleasure-loving Venus? What feeds



you? Feel your roots sinking deep into the earth, drawing your nourishment from this dark, constant storehouse. Imagine your response if you were struck, if your bark were carved or peeled, if your branches were cut by loggers or ravaged by storms, if your trunk were split by lightening? How would Saturn in Taurus react?

Sensing Taurus this way might help us better understand why those with Taurus planets can be so immovable at times, resistant to change, endlessly acquiring, indulging, hanging on. It's also easy to see why the nourishing, sensitive Moon is exalted in Taurus. And why, itchy-for-action Mars is in its detriment in this sign.

Taurus craves security. Its stability and loyalty can deepen our pleasure in living on earth. Its weight can slow us down enough so that we can appreciate the sky again or listen to the wind or read messages in the clouds. Taurus is practical too, encouraging a methodical attention to any task. Although I don't have planets in Taurus, this sign brings an anchoring presence to my beliefs through its 9th house placement in my chart. With my Sagittarius Sun (and perhaps my California birth), I'm particularly receptive to the latest new ideas and modalities ("*Wear a pyramid on my head? Sure!*"). But each new discovery must pass my Taurus 9th house reality test. If I can't ground the new concept into my body, if I can't literally feel its truth, if it won't nourish and sustain me as the soil does a tree, my interest disappears.



♈

"You're not a Taurus, are you?" Whenever I'm in a group and someone discovers I'm an astrologer, a conversation about loved and hated zodiac signs generally ensues. This usually says more about people's propensity to love and hate things (especially other people) than it does anything meaningful about zodiac signs.

"I don't like Taurus," the man repeated. The strangest thing about this comment was him. He was short and stocky, with a strong, stubborn jaw. He seemed earthy and solid, the kind of person you wouldn't push but could lean on. He didn't talk much; when he spoke, the words came slowly, deliberately. From what he shared, he'd been loyal to friends and family, but was angry about the instability this had brought him. To help his family through a rough time, he'd sold his possessions and had to keep flying back and forth to his native country Peru. During breaks in the workshop we were both attending, he mostly stayed put, wrapped in his coat, motionless as a rock. If I were to "guess his sign" (a game I never actually play), Taurus would have been my first choice.

"I'm a Sagittarius," he said. "Me too," I replied. We looked at each other and instantly recognized that despite our common sun signs, we had no affinity. We turned to continue our conversations elsewhere. "My mother and brother-in-law are Taurus," I overheard him saying. Vaguely I tallied his move away from his homeland as something Sagittarian, but everything else about his style and current misery said Taurus.

♈

Perhaps he was a Taurus rising or had a Taurus moon. Maybe we would have recognized our Sagittarian likeness in another context. Though I love astrology, typing people by signs has always been my least favorite use for it. I don't like the way it divides us into zodiac "visitor" and "home" teams, or within, into a kaleidoscope of various personality traits. With or without the man's chart in front of me, I could see that he desperately needed a new relationship with Taurus. Horoscopes hold all twelve signs and each is a part of us in some measure. As transiting planets cycle through our charts in overlapping rhythms, every sign will have its time.

"I have" is the key phrase for Taurus. And problems with possession can plague us in this sign. I don't know why the Peruvian man disliked his Taurus mother and brother-in-law, but a likely story is that someone took the desire-to-acquire in the wrong direction. At least that's what got the Cretan Bull in trouble. Before Hercules rode it, King Minos desired it. Minos was an early practitioner of the Law of Attraction and liked to brag about his special relationship with the gods. He claimed he could manifest whatever he wanted. To prove it he prayed to Poseidon, requesting a bull from the depths of the sea, which he promised to immediately sacrifice back. Poseidon sent a splendid bull, so good, in fact, that Minos couldn't bear to part with it. He concealed it among his herd and sacrificed another in its place. Furious, Poseidon drove the Bull crazy. Then he caused Queen Pasiphae to fall in love with it.



Others say that Venus was to blame, that like her husband, Pasiphae lacked proper reverence and had neglected to honor Venus for so long, the goddess cursed her with a most unnatural desire. Whichever god caused it, poor Pasiphae kept visiting the cattle yard and suggestively dropping her robe, but the Bull paid no attention. Finally she asked the gifted maker Daedalus to build a wooden cow for her to hide in, and that's how the Bull made love to her. Pasiphae gave birth to a hideous monster, half/man, half/bull. Suitably shamed, King Minos arranged for Daedalus to build a labyrinth in which to hide the beast. Seven youths and seven maidens were regularly sacrificed to feed the Minotaur.

It's a cautionary tale for Taurus, not surprisingly about wealth and sex. Taurus is meant to love the world of form, but not too much. Compare Minos stealing the Bull with Hercules riding it. Hercules models an easy control of the animal, and symbolically, his own animal passions. He moves with ease, as we should in Taurus, respecting the natural flow. When we do, we move gracefully. We enjoy what we have when it's time to have it. And we release what the gods want back when it's time to let go. But violating natural law, King Minos hangs onto the Bull. He is possessed instead of possessing. His desire controls him. Soon he'll be stuck with a monstrosity.

The creativity of Taurus, represented by Daedalus, is bent to poor purposes in this story—constructing a wooden cow and a deadly labyrinth. Recently I visited



a lovely Taurus Sun/Moon with Cancer rising. She lives alone but is helpless to control all the clutter in her house. Every cupboard and closet is crammed with family keepsakes that she claims loved ones insist she save for them. How did she lose her ability to say no? I think of another Taurus who's worked for years at a job he says is making him sick. And another who is stiff and heartbroken, refusing to forgive her adult children. These are the cows and labyrinths that real Tauruses can build for themselves—getting into unnatural holding places with rationalizations as worn and circular as the paths in a labyrinth, over time losing life force, just as the sacrificed youths lost theirs. In the myth, clever Theseus eventually slays both the Cretan Bull and the Minotaur. Surely he's a Gemini hero, hinting at how Taurus excess and stubbornness can be corrected with the next sign's virtues, its adaptability, quick wit, and lightness of being.

Taurus is so readily associated with money that its wealth is an astrological cliché. But having Taurus planets doesn't necessarily make someone rich or even good at managing their funds. I have two friends with sun in Taurus. One has money; it runs through the others' fingers. A closer look at their chart provides some clues. The one with money has an 8th house sun and achieved her wealth through 8th house means: inheritance and investments. The other's sun is in the 6th house of employment; sure enough, she's always had to work for wages (low ones at that).

♈

But to stop here misses a deeper point. Consider what astrologer Barbara Watters says about earth signs and financial management: *"In my years of actual experience with clients ... continually telling earth people they were practical and had sound values about money simply didn't wash. In the first place, they knew it wasn't so, and the practical money-oriented jobs I suggested—always following the rules in the books—often didn't appeal to them."*⁵

*"Many painters and sculptors have a strong Taurus emphasis, and they're not money-oriented at all. I think the materialistic label comes from the fact that Taurus is preoccupied with the tangible and the physical. (...) All the fixed signs function primarily as organizers. Leo organizes power, Scorpio organizes knowledge, Aquarius organizes society, and Taurus organizes the physical resources of the individual or earth. (...) Taurus loves the process of organizing the physical assets of the earth, whether or not it makes him rich."*⁶

This describes both of my Taurus friends: the one poring over her stock portfolio, the other sorting her beloved books, beads, paints, feathers and fabrics. Which resources we organize with Taurus is our choice. It could be money, sex, art or something else. But it's what and how we choose that defines our Taurus experience. May we choose with the steady honor of Hercules, not as greedy Minos or his goddess-neglecting wife, but with full reverence, knowing that what we touch and hold in Taurus is sacred. Let's appreciate what we receive. Let's create with care. And let us always be lovers here.

♈



- 1 . C. Kerényi, *The Heroes of the Greeks* (Thames and Hudson, 1959), p. 159
- 2 . Alice Bailey, *The Labours of Hercules* (Lucis Publishing, 1974)
- 3 . Robert Hand, *Horoscope Symbols* (Whitford Press, 1981), p. 243
- 4 . *ibid.*, p. 243
- 5 . Barbara H. Watters, *What's Wrong with Your Sun Sign?* (Valhalla Paperbacks, 1970), p. 82.
- 6 . *ibid.*, p. 81.

GEMINI

THE HUNDRED-HEADED DRAGON OF GEMINI

II

Years ago I took my first week-long meditation retreat. It was held in the high desert.

I've long since forgotten the names and faces of my fellow dharma seekers. My teacher's wit and reprimands have faded too. Only one figure remains in memory: the wind. The desert wind was alive.

Moaning outside the zendo, flapping the blinds, it would suddenly open a door, then suddenly go silent. Mornings, when I watered the plants around the dormitory, the wind would grab handfuls of the precious water and toss them on the pavement where they could do no good. Once, when I was supposed to ring the bell announcing the afternoon sit, the wind ran ahead of me and stripped the sound from the air. Daily I swept the corridors outside the zendo. During a windstorm this might seem like a perfectly hopeless (or perfectly zenlike) task, but the wind never littered my walkways. Perhaps to confound expectations, it kept them completely clear. The same wasn't true of the desert. It roistered with the wind's cast-off playthings. Candy wrappers, plastic bags, and string were everywhere, pinned and waving from the stubbly plants. What the wind couldn't sail, it played like a virtuoso, clanging an old tin roof, drumming a loose board from an abandoned dog house, or strumming a thousand palo verde branches at once.

The wind was a trickster. It was quick, clever, playful; also restless, noisy, unpredictable, and infuriating. If the desert wind were a zodiac sign, there's only one it could be: versatile, elusive, inventive and scatter-brained Gemini.

II

This thought came to me during one of the meditation periods, when my mind was supposed to be stilled into silence. If you've ever kept a meditation practice, you'll understand. You'll know why sitting motionless on a zafu in a quiet room, with the support of a teacher and a dozen others likewise engaged, I was a prisoner of my racing mind. Constantly in motion, it leapt, chattered, and circled around itself, like the wind howling outside the zendo. Six hours after leaving my first retreat, the inner peace I'd struggled hard to achieve simply vanished. I only remembered the wind.

Through the wind we meet Gemini's spirit in the natural world. Through the mind we find Gemini inside ourselves. Consider the following observations about mind from Buddhist nun Ayya Khema. How closely they resemble astrology's descriptions of Gemini. *"The mind is clever and manipulative. ... It has the ability to tell us anything. It can talk about any subject and see any side of a subject. ... We call it a magician, which is a good word for it. It can pull a rabbit out of any hat. It can rationalize to the point where we are always right and everybody else is wrong."* This curious and agile mind of ours, just like Gemini, craves stimulation. *"It wants to read a book, watch television, visit the neighbors, do some work, anything to be occupied and entertained. It cannot be happy and contented just on its own."*¹

We all have minds like this - which is why encountering Gemini means more than meeting the alternately delightful and exasperating traits of our Gemini friends. If your horoscope has Mercury (Gemini's ruler), a third house (Gemini's natural home), and Gemini somewhere on the wheel (everyone does), you too express its energy. It's just a matter of degree. More typically we use the zodiac to divide and classify, pretending that some signs

are just about others. But all signs dance within us in some measure and it's the Gemini archetype that makes this possible. Gemini is the Great Connector. Aries initiates, Taurus stabilizes, and Gemini connects. It is through the action of this sign that information flows in our bodies, cell talking to cell. Through Gemini we register the cues in our environment. We learn from them. We reach out to others, communicate through language, and can understand multiple points of view. Through Gemini, we can shift with a roiling unity between the various sub-personalities of our chart. It's not just the Geminis who say one thing and do another, who pull answers out of thin air and later deny them, who can morph into a cutting evil twin. Just like our charming Gemini friends, we too have moments of ingenuity and dexterity. We juggle multiple enthusiasms and can be quite clever with our gossip and news.

One afternoon while sweeping outside the zendo, I looked up and discovered an amazing sight. Arcing beautifully through the air was a plastic grocery bag. Pearl white against a cloudless blue sky, this cheap little thing had been transformed by the wind into a marvel, a fantastic sailing globe. To make something out of nothing is a consummate Gemini skill. With its talented hands, Gemini can be an impressive mechanic or craftsperson, but what it most loves to play with is air, tinkering and toiling with ideas. "I think" is Gemini's key phrase. Through the agency of this sign and its ruler Mercury, we think, we read, we talk, we write. And now with Facebook and Twitter, we can live in a constant Tower of Babel. At internet cafes, there may be triple lattes in our cups, but we're all really drunk on Gemini.

But then how tiresome, contradictory, and insubstantial the mind's playthings can become. On Tuesday you're delighted with Marcia; on Thursday, your mind narrows in on her obvious flaws. You agree with today's editorial against finance reform; reading the opposite view just below it, you find that makes sense too. Maybe you should buy life insurance, no, save for your kids' tuition, no, you really need a new car. Shouldn't you wait for fuel technologies to improve? And oh! You forgot to update your blog. In the end, it's easy to agree with the Buddhists that all this precious content is empty, much like the baubles of the wind. How many thoughts have you had in the past hour? Can you remember any of them?

Thoughts move and the stronger Gemini is in your chart, the more quickly you'll move with them. Many of my Gemini clients have worried about their inability to focus or commit. Steve had bounced from one career to another. Once the job got old, usually about six months into it, he was ready to move

onto something new. He had a horror of doing this for the rest of his life. I told him what a fine astrologer once told me: wherever Gemini appears, do two. It's the hidden message of its glyph. It's the advice in its symbol, the twins. Wherever this sign appears, find at least two things that please you. With Gemini on the Midheaven, keep two careers at once (I've been happiest when I do). With Gemini on the Ascendant, two wardrobes, two personas. Eleventh house Gemini? Two sets of friends. On the 3rd or 9th house? Read two books concurrently, have two majors in school.

Gemini is a nervous, high-energy sign. Planets here need two goals to dash between. When one direction gets tiresome, Gemini can keep up its spirits by running the other way. Likely there's a Gemini Moon or 4th house Gemini in the charts of those we sometimes hear about, with one family on the east coast and another kept quietly in a western state for years. Of course "doing two" isn't always easy. I've heard poignant complaints from

Venuses in Gemini who were desperately in love with two people and just couldn't choose. Our culture prefers monogamy, but given the frequency of infidelity and divorce, perhaps Gemini is on to something.

How do we keep our lives interesting? That's the real Gemini question. We could be like the wind and just blow from one thing to another. Or we could be more like another Gemini icon, the Storyteller. Applying a storyteller's imagination to life can help us weave Gemini's myriad interests into a series of successful adventures. The secret is all in the plotting. Good storytellers hold our interest with smart pacing and suspense. Through patient and artful unfolding, they keep us interested, curious. And they know where they're going. Likewise, when Gemini

has a goal that's seductive enough, it can carry itself through the alternately boring and daunting complications of any project. Gemini can learn from Scheherazade, one of the world's great storytellers. She saved her life and kept her king intrigued for a thousand and one nights—for if he'd ever grown bored with her, she'd have lost her head. Her trick? She wove beautiful stories, but stopped each tale at dawn with a cliff hanger that left the king wanting more. In the evening after that tale was done, she quickly started a new one.

A Taurus businessman with Gemini rising once explained to me how successful companies follow a similar strategy. They'll start something new just as their current projects are peaking. When its blue widgets are flying off the shelves, a good company will start developing its quad widget market. Thus, when the inevitable decline of blue widgets arrives (*"The top,"* he explained, *"means there's nowhere to go but down"*), the revenue loss is offset by its growing quad-widget sales. Of course corporate innovators must have Gemini's ability to plug into the changing needs of the world they serve. Converting that into a series of well-paced goals can keep them successful for a long time. It's a good strategy for Gemini too.

Most people don't let themselves dream big enough, or true enough to their purpose. Some Geminis have the added problem of dreaming on air, dreams so disembodied or high-flying that on some level, even they don't believe they'll come true, so why bother yanking them into reality. After awhile this Gemini type is parked on the sidelines, repeating its cynical story (*"Nothing will work...nothing is true"*). It's a tired and wrinkled Peter Pan in sagging tights saying, *"Sorry Wendy, I just can't believe anymore."* You don't expect to find Gemini stuck, or even acting old. But it happens, especially when fear, restlessness, or boredom wins. That's when Gemini needs to rediscover its ignorance. It must search among its multiple personalities and locate the Gemini Fool, who knows absolutely nothing and of whom no one expects anything. He's the simpleton hero in all fairy tale quests involving three brothers. The youngest one, who doesn't know how to ride, hunt, or talk to a king, he somehow finds magical birds or golden apples or talking squirrels and achieves the treasure. Gemini's Fool lives in childlike curiosity and enthusiasm. If he must do the same thing everyday, he's so engaged, he doesn't even know that it's boring.

The key to Gemini's success

For years I worked at a market research firm. We were information brokers, testing public opinion on new products and advertising. We distinguished ourselves from competitors with our quick turnaround. Whatever our client's question, we'd get the answer sooner than anyone else. The building was a constant frenzy of activity. Walk by any desk and you'd find someone reading data with one eye, discussing another project on the phone, while writing a note to someone standing by their desk for yet another job. Who thrived in this environment? Geminis, of course! The company's founding chairman was a Gemini, and the ones most successful in it were usually Geminis too.

I began studying astrology while working there. It became amusing to watch new hires without Gemini planets (or without a strong 3rd house or Mercury), or even worse, with no air in their charts, eventually run screaming from the building. This could be how Hercules felt about his Gemini labor. His task was to retrieve three golden apples from the Garden of the Hesperides. The apple tree was Gaia's gift to Hera on her wedding day, and was guarded by Ladon, an immortal dragon with a hundred heads, all braying and yammering in different tongues. Beyond the dragon, encircling the tree were the Hesperides. Joyful daughters of Atlas in their garden of bliss, they were also death goddesses, who left their tree only to devour their prey.

Immortal foes cannot be killed. One can only outsmart them. Hercules stabbed at Ladon's heads with his sword and eventually saw this was futile. He threw rocks and fireballs. He punched and kicked. But the cacophonous heads never recoiled. Hercules tired himself out. He sat down and watched. After a few days he discovered an interesting fact:

every day, just before the cock's crow, all two hundred eyes would shut for precisely one second. Hercules practiced running up hills to increase his speed and when he was ready, he raced past the sleeping dragon at just the right instant. Then he reached the death goddesses. They stopped their dancing and sneered at him. Politely he asked for

three apples. They hissed and spat. So he studied them. He saw how beautiful were the ankles of one, the fingers of another, and the voice of the third. He wove these details into a clever rhyme which he recited one afternoon. Flattered, they asked to hear it again. "*Only if you toss me the apples,*" he replied. Each was charmed enough to throw him one.

Listening is important in Gemini's labor. Ultimately, it's the key to this chatty sign's success. Hercules must be more like a student than a hero. To best his foes, he needs to learn how to be a Gemini, becoming observant, quick, clever, and charming. His foes are exaggerated versions of negative Gemini traits. Ladon's numerous wiggling

heads suggest Gemini's penchant for talking through both sides of its mouth, constantly shifting direction, and just plain babbling. The Hesperides remind us of Gemini's duality, how quickly it can shift from joyful enthusiasm into a sneering point of view.

The apples represent the endless knowledge of the world that curious

Gemini can't resist. Ladon and the Hesperides actually perform a service in guarding it, as do the Gemini's with whom we sometimes argue. Their skepticism and inconsistencies may exasperate us, but they also test us. At their most contentious, Gemini's make us pause and rethink our strategies, as the dragon/goddesses did for Hercules. Skeptical

Gemini forces us to sharpen our minds. Publicity agents know that whenever public cynicism is high, the only story they can safely tell is an honest one. Likewise Gemini's cynicism can save us from getting mired in our own delusions. Gemini is an elastic sign, but periodically it gets exhausted from all this stretching. Then it turns against

itself. Or it gets mired in its own falsehoods. That's another meaning for the golden apples: they're emblems for Gemini's need to keep nourishing itself.

I learned this from my own Gemini planet, Jupiter in the 10th house. Usually I feel quite blessed by this placement, but periodically I'm drained by its enthusiasms.

What does my 10th house Jupiter in Gemini want? An easy way to understand any 10th house planet is to apply the word “professional” to whatever it symbolizes. With a 10th house Gemini Jupiter I could become a professional teacher, writer, or symbol reader (all of which I’ve been). In my twenties, I was in a Masters program at Columbia University, on my way to becoming a professional “literary academic,” also Jupiter territory. But halfway through the program, I turned my back on Jupiter. My complaint? With this planet, I could make anything meaningful.

Through my Gemini Jupiter, I could read deep archetypal significance in the yellow pages, Hallmark cards, or patterns of leaves on a sidewalk. I could look at anything and identify its Shakespearan genius. My talent for reading symbolism seemed endless, indiscriminate and pointless. I dropped out of

grad school. For the next ten years I smoked dope, watered houseplants, and watched soap operas. I wanted to be writing stories, but never managed to finish one. Like the dragon, I was just babbling.

What saved me was a local community college writing class. I think the teacher actually was a Gemini, though I can’t trust my memory. Whatever his sun sign, Dr. Hertz retrieved the golden apples for me and reawakened my love of Jupiter’s Gemini skills. Dr. Hertz read literature unlike anyone I’d met before. He did not interpret symbols and pronounce themes like an academician. Instead, he read authors more

personally and aggressively, looking to each book for the answers to his own questions about life, confident he’d find the truths he was seeking. After a few weeks, I understood. It did not matter whether I read candy wrappers, Milton, or later, astrology symbols. What mattered was the authenticity of the questions I asked. If you ask stupid questions, you get stupid answers. But when you’re charged with genuine curiosity about your work and your life, you’ll find meaning everywhere. And that’s not a curse. It’s a gift.

Expressing Gemini properly

I’ve given you the short version of Hercules’ Gemini labor. Of course it wouldn’t be Gemini’s story if there weren’t at least two versions of the tale. The longer one, which is more often told, is full of action, brawls, honor, and trickery. It begins, as most Gemini adventures begin, with not-knowing. Hercules has no idea where the golden apple tree grows. Appropriately, he must go around the world seeking information. But first, near the river Echedorus, Cycnus challenges Hercules to a fight; their battling goes on all day until a thunderbolt breaks them up. At the next river, he charms two nymphs into showing him where the god Nereus lives. Nereus is a shape shifter. He turns himself into a rabbit, doe, nymph, stone and toad, hoping to escape, but Hercules catches him and holds fast until Nereus reveals the location of the Hesperides.

This sends Hercules through Libya, ruled at the time by Antaeus, who liked to kill strangers by forcing them to wrestle. Again Hercules must fight, but he makes quick work of Antaeus. Discovering his opponent gets his strength from touching the ground, Hercules hugs him, lifts him aloft, and breaks his back. In Egypt, our hero is delayed by Busiris. An oracle once advised Busiris that his crops would prosper if he sacrificed a stranger to the gods every year. Busiris began by sacrificing the seer and continued slaughtering all strangers who arrived. Hercules is seized and brought to the altar, but escapes and kills Busiris instead. Going through the Caucasus Mountains, Hercules

discovers Prometheus, chained to a rock with an eagle devouring his liver. Hercules feels great compassion for the Titan who brought fire to mankind. He takes out his bow and shoots the eagle, which allows the bargain struck by Chiron (to change places with Prometheus) to proceed. A grateful Prometheus then sends Hercules to Atlas, holding the weight of the Earth on his shoulders. *"Take the globe from him and he'll go get the apples for you,"* says Prometheus. Atlas does just that, but decides he likes being free of his burden. "I'll take the apples back to the King instead," he says. Hercules pretends that's okay, but asks Atlas to take the earth for just a minute so he can slip a pillow on his shoulders. When Atlas agrees, Hercules grabs the apples and runs.

What an exhausting story! Here too we meet the best and worst of Gemini. The tale's odd plot indicates the variety of experiences Gemini must initiate and pursue. It's like an instruction manual for expressing Gemini properly. If we start near the story's end, we find Hercules has mastered commitment, as he can stand in one spot and takes the world on his shoulders. This contrasts with the flimsier Antaeus, who is weak when aloft, like the Gemini who flies from one thing to another without grounding himself. When Hercules shoots the eagle, he proves not only his capacity to focus, but his ability to play a useful role in someone else's story. Gemini seeks the apples of knowledge, but it's a social sign too, and must keep joining the world in meaningful ways. Our hero must also learn to avoid distractions, like his pointless fight with Cycnus. Seizing Nereus, Hercules develops persistence and the capacity to see the pattern of truth in changing shapes. Ending Busiris' charade, he takes a stand against gullibility and lies. Through his long adventure, Hercules learns how to think with clarity, flexibility and wit, which leads him to his final test, wriggling out of a burden that isn't his. Hercules must leave Atlas with the world on his shoulders, for like Gemini, he's got lots more adventures and learning to pursue. May you do the same with your Gemini planets!

Notes

1. Ayya Khema, *Being Nobody Going Nowhere*, (Wisdom Publications, 1987), pp. 27, 29, 32.

A close-up of a blue and white ceramic plate. The plate features a central medallion and a wide rim, both decorated with a repeating pattern of grapevines, leaves, and clusters of grapes. The word "CANCER" is printed in a white, serif, all-caps font with a thin black outline, centered over the middle of the plate.

CANCER



"You can go around me," said the Goddess, twirling on her heels like a bird darting away, but just a little away, "or you can come after me. This is my forest too, you can't pretend I'm not here."

The Very Short Sutra on the Meeting of the Buddha and the Goddess.¹

You can't pretend the Goddess isn't here. That's especially true in your Cancer house and it's what Hercules learns on his Cancer journey. In the hero's third labor, King Eurystheus directs him to capture (without harming) the Ceryneian hind, a red doe sacred to Artemis, Goddess of the Moon. The bronze-footed doe is faster than an arrow. She's as elusive as the security we usually seek with our Cancer planets and as agile and unpredictable as our feelings.

The Ceryneian hind is feminine, but has a stag's antlers, golden ones, symbolizing divine power and receptivity. The antlers are like cosmic antennae into which the Moon Goddess pours her Cancer gifts of intuition and inspiration. (Not surprisingly, Moon-ruled Cancer is often strong in the charts of successful creatives like artists and businessmen, who like mothers and gardeners, have rich imaginations and enjoy making things grow.) The doe is a formidable quarry – but also sensitive and vulnerable (as are we in our Cancer house). One critic has suggested the hind is reminiscent of Sibyls and ancient priestesses who were incapable of issuing prophecies in anything less than a harmonious environment.² Their delicate sensibilities required seclusion, being protected from anything unpleasant, harsh or upsetting.

To unfold the sensitive powers of Cancer is what Hercules' mission is all about. It's not easy. If the doe were a monster, he could grab his club and kill it, but to capture the deer without injury is more challenging. The focused masculine is disadvantaged in the feminine realm. Hercules sees the hind's antlers sparkling in the sun and starts his chase in high spirits. A year later he is still in pursuit, traveling across Greece, Thrace, Istria and the land of the Hyperboreans.

The doe keeps eluding him. When finally he sights her at a nearby stream, he is both elated and exasperated. Hercules draws his bow and shoots. *"Just a little wound,"* he tells himself. He throws the injured doe over his shoulder, relieved at his victory. His joy is short-lived. Just beyond the next grove of trees, he meets the Goddess. Artemis is furious. The hero wilts under her gaze.

We can't pretend the Moon Goddess isn't watching - especially if we seek her

Cancer blessings. Whether we desire more affection, a safe haven, or creative inspiration, we must play by her rules. Ignoring her guarantees her wrath. Case in point: the tale of a modern-day Hercules who hoped to capture her goodies. Jay Chiat was one of the top advertising executives in the last quarter century. When his agency's reputation began slipping, he hoped to regain its creative edge by radically redesigning its offices (a Cancer domain). This was long before the lean Pluto-in-Capricorn years of downsizing and pragmatism. It was the early nineties, when Pluto was approaching Sagittarius. Chiat dreamed of an office that ran wild with Sagittarian freedom.

There would be no cubicles, no walls, not even a desk. His gypsy employees would have only a laptop, a portable phone, and their portable imaginations. They would improvise their workspace wherever inspiration took them, joining with co-workers in an inspired ebb and flow of productive community. The liberated employees got minimalist lockers and a new morning ritual, lining up at the equipment cubby to get

their daily laptop and phone. After that they were free to roam among the futuristic artwork and clusters of couches, or brainstorm with coworkers in the wacky "Tilt-a-Whirl" cars salvaged from amusement park rides. And if the mood struck, they could carry their work outside, to the park or the beach. With bodies thus freed, Chiat enthused, what creative marvels their unfettered minds might produce!

Chiat claims he did listen to employee input, but according to one insider, he listened only to himself. When workers complained they needed more privacy, Chiat replied, *"You will have private space, it just won't be personal space."*³ A critical miscalculation. Private spaces don't satisfy emotional needs nearly so well as personal ones do. People want to nest. They need desks, places for family photos. They crave the comfort of familiar things. They have a natural terror of too much exposure. In the ocean of life, everyone wants a shell of safety, a protected place we can call our own. Because of this universal need that astrologers call "Cancer," Chiat's bold experiment was doomed.

Still, Chiat fought hard. He roamed his building on the lookout for “nesters.” If he found someone sitting in the same spot for two days, he’d tell them to move. He wanted no paper in his virtual office. But employees gradually began sneaking their hard copies out to the parking lot, loading the trunks of their cars like file cabinets. At least one worker wheeled her belongings around in a little red wagon. Soon people stopped returning their laptops and phones at the end of the day, hiding them in corners and behind plants. Nasty signs started to appear in the client meeting rooms: *“Keep out! This is mine!”* Knee deep in squabbles and grumbling, Chiat’s wide open spaces were eventually carved up by turf wars as bitter as any fought in ancient Greece.

Offices are Cancer-ruled. So are nests, warrens and cubbies; cradles, wombs, wells, and boats; parking spaces too, also skyscrapers and cities. We judge these Cancer spaces by how they feel to us. Humans are territorial because we like feeling nestled in the arms of the Mother, nourished, comforted, and safe. Sure as Hercules collided with Artemis, so did Chiat run afoul of the Moon Goddess. She reacted with fury, raising an army of self-centered whiners. She soured the workers and turned them into a retaliating, manipulative mob. Creativity suffered.

Chiat surrendered. He sold his company and, like Elvis, left the building. Its new owners partitioned the open floor into workstations (called “nests”). Cave-like offices were installed along

the wall (“cliff dwellings”). Lessons were learned. The Goddess returned to her heaven. Everyone got a personal space of some kind.

In the sky, Cancer’s constellation includes a faint smudge of stars called “Praesepe” (meaning “manger”); the ancient Greeks pictured in Cancer a manger from which two neighboring (donkey) stars were feeding. “Beehive” is another traditional name for this cluster, as its round, fuzzy appearance can also look like a swarm of bees. Both images are similarly Cancerian. Neither heroic nor dazzling, they describe simple holding places, for bees and livestock feed, containing the Goddess’ goods, honey and grain. Today we view this constellation as a crab. The Babylonians saw a tortoise, the Egyptians a scarab beetle. How similar are these creatures! Each carries its hard-shelled home around it, and with it, the Goddess’ values, concern for lowly, vulnerable (even creepy) things.

Astronomers are quick to point out that Cancer is an inconspicuous constellation. This news is generally delivered with an air of triumph—as though its dim stars were proof of astrology’s ignorance, confirming that its practitioners don’t know much about the real sky. Cancer may not be a spectacular-looking constellation. But that this little collection of stars should keep evoking similar perceptions in us is perhaps itself spectacular—how again and again, this piece of the sky reminds us of the Goddess and her values.

• The Cancer tactics • • • • •

DANA GERHARDT

I know what I'd like to experience in my Cancer house – something like the womb-dreamy feeling

I get at the local hot springs on Mondays (the Moon's day), when it's ladies night, and the outdoor pool is filled with naked breasts and babies and laughter and cooing and encouragement, all under the knowing gaze of the Moon. If doctors could write prescriptions for this feeling, they'd give us oxytocin, the "cuddle hormone." Naturally produced by nursing mothers, it's also the active ingredient in romantic bonding for both sexes. Oxytocin is what transforms sex into love. Emotional support – caring, compassion, soothing touch, appreciation – all increase oxytocin levels. This in turn decreases stress, depression and illness. Open-heartedness is the best way to bring this goodness into your Cancer house and planets. So why is the symbol for Cancer a hard-shelled, pincer-bearing crab?

First, the obvious: its defensive shell signals how Cancer planets can be inward turning, secretive and self-protective. Mercury in Cancer is an excellent listener and has a fine intuition, but it can also be shy about expressing what it knows. Gentle Venus in Cancer may trade passion for security, then pout or issue the silent treatment to draw the love she craves. An angry Cancer in Mars might pretend nothing is wrong as he inwardly broods and steams. What else does the crab suggest? Its branched limbs give it remarkable mobility on rocks and in tide pools. But on straight sand, its scuttling sideways walk looks strange. Likewise Cancer planets may scuttle around, approaching destinations obliquely rather than head on. I once worked with two women who both had Mars in Cancer. They were often huddled and whispering together, plotting, I presumed. And they were forever surprising me by tacking in new directions, yet never staying with a particular course very long. Jupiter in Cancer can get easily side-tracked too, expanding its sentimentality and self-indulgence rather than the good fortune this exalted placement can bring. If provoked, however,

Cancer planets can be quite focused. When a crab raises its pincers in attack, it is pointed and persistent. Likewise, if a Cancer Moon senses

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a threat to herself or a loved one, she'll go at it with a vengeance.

Crabs are scavengers. They pick among the seaweed and whatever else washes up on shore, looking for fish and shellfish carcasses to tear apart with their strong claws. Their work creates food for smaller creatures, which is in tune with the Mother's business of nurture. I don't typically think of Cancer planets as scavengers. But they do chew on the past. (And we might wonder what food gets dispersed for the rest of us with their nibbled memories.) Cancer's crab of course was a favorite of the Goddess Hera. She was a break-down artist. Consider the way she worked to bring down Zeus. How audacious to go after the God of all gods! Yet she didn't meet him as a hero would, eye to eye, in a fair fight. She tore at him from the sidelines, till he cringed, cowered, and hid.

Cancer planets may likewise take on bigger foes, wielding power through nagging or manipulation. Passive aggression and resistance are other common Cancer tactics. Two figures most revered for their passive resistance, the 14th Dalai Lama and Ghandi, have Cancer on the Ascendant and Midheaven, respectively. The persona and global reputations of these men certify them as Cancer icons, embodiments of the Mother's compassion and protection. Their careers have broadcast Cancer's great and patient strength: holding one's position until the surrounding world yields.

But perhaps the most telling fact about crabs is where they choose to live. Crabs dwell on the shoreline, a transitional space, between the swirling ocean and solid earth. It is turbulent and variable there, among the rocks and sand, with the tides rushing in and out. Why didn't crabs evolve to forever swim in the endless, formless water, like an octopus or fish? Why not run on hard land like lions? Crabs must have a love – or need – for both form and formlessness. With the vast ocean at their back, they are still in touch with the rhythms of creation's great womb, while their body is suited to clutch and maneuver on the anchoring presence of solid ground. Shuttling between sea and land, they manage to thrive in this tumultuous meeting place. It's the habitat that most explains

the protected shell, the sideways walk, and the grabbing pincers. Cancer's crabs seek security because, fundamentally, the world they know is constantly shifting.

This is useful information for your Cancer house. Whether it rules your 7th house of partnership, the 2nd of money and resources, or the 11th of friends and future dreams, think of this territory as a symbolic shoreline, a transitional space between two receptive elements, earth and water. Water is the Mother's nurturing medium, everyone's first home. It bonds the psyche to invisible forces, things felt but not seen: intuition, memory, emotion. You bring a special sensitivity to whatever area of your life is Cancer-ruled, an awareness of more than meets the eye. There is an action of cycles too, a rhythm beyond your conscious control. You must tune in and flow along—or you'll struggle against the tide. You also need solid ground in this house, the feeling that you're anchored and safe. Your Cancer planets crave security, the sensuality of form, the pleasures of shelter, and the intricate beauty of varied terrains. Cancer brings the comfort of familiar possessions—as well as collisions with whatever is hard and resistant. Given the shifting pulls of water and earth, it's easy to understand the deep anxiety this house can hold. At times your Cancer house may be an uneasy, unsteady world.

☞ How well you do in this house may depend on the rest of your chart. With an afflicted Moon and many placements in water, the chaotic swirl of emotions within and around you can make you confused, unable to ground your efforts, vainly clutching for security and form. Too little water and you may deny your sensitivity, keeping emotional secrets from yourself. Denial is a way of making the visible invisible and reality formless. Not-knowing is turning the Goddess' gift of intuition inside out. Losing touch with the action of cycles, you may express them unconsciously as moodiness; you're helpless against the changing circumstances you find yourself in. (The one who drives these tides is often your own Moon).

At best your Cancer house can be an area of tremendous creativity. With patience and skill, you can tease the invisible into form in countless ways. You may feel the trembling, fluttering movement of spirit and capture it in a poem that stands forever. You might simply sense another's need for comforting and offer it. You may intuit a social ideal and hold it so strongly that like Ghandi or the Dalai Lama, the world gradually adjusts to it. Whatever your vision or call, you have the capacity to cultivate and feed the very processes of life. You are the bird who knows life is coming and so builds a nest for it, you are the mother who makes space in her womb.

The real Cancer treasure . . .

A friend recently sent me an email that inspired such sadness, I lost an hour of work. It was a sequence of photographs showing a red-rumped swallow that had been hit by a car as it flew across the road. Its mate tried to rouse it, then rescue it; finally it became aware that its partner was dead. The bird grieved. As Pluto in Capricorn opposes Cancer planets in the coming years*, not only will we see bizarre Cancer tales about Octomoms and 73-year-old fathers, we will see many more heart-wrenching stories about loss, homelessness, child abuse, and hunger. We will have many opportunities to grieve.

The United States is a Cancer Sun nation. We like to think of ourselves as being compassionate protectors of the world (we'll forget about Iraq). We are sensitive and sentimental. Hollywood knows this about us and considers carefully before giving us an unhappy ending. They know we hate to throw our hearts into characters and see bad things happen to them. We like to exit the theater in an upbeat, victorious mood. Poet Robert Bly declared that America has achieved the dubious honor of being *"the first consistent culture of denial in the modern world."* Denial, he says, *"is the naive person's inability to face the harsh facts of life."*⁴

It would be denial to study Cancer without wondering what happens to the inevitable pain we experience with our sensitivity. Not all our conceptions result in a glorious birth. No matter how great our love, we cannot protect everything we cherish. Even what thrives under our care will at some point outgrow us. And we ourselves may have painful memories of being young and defenseless, under the care of parents who should have loved us more expertly (or so the therapists say).

Bad things can happen and sometimes it is we ourselves who do bad things.

Nests can be full of bad dreams. Nightmares are the inexorable flip side of Cancer's dependencies, of being mothered and mothering. It's the pain summed up by the poet Andrei Voznesensky as *darkmother-scream*. *"Darkmotherscream is... /a cry from prison or a yell for help... / Dark-motherscream is ... /the original mother of languages... /Don't forget - Rome fell/ not having grasped the phrase: dark-motherscream."*⁵

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Cancer’s sensitivity is heart-break-
ing – or more precisely, it breaks our hearts open.

The gift of our dark scream is a compassion that can change
the world. This is Cancer’s ultimate destination and task. It re-
quires a new partnership between the masculine and feminine – or
intellect and feeling. Hercules’ labor with the Ceryneian Hind provides a
roadmap for this process. (That Hercules must labor at all is the result of his
own darkmotherscream. Hera had driven him mad enough to kill his wife and
children; the 12 labors are his atonement for that crime.) Hercules, as intellect,
must learn to listen. The year he spends following the hind is a training in receptiv-
ity. We too must train our minds to follow the inner emotional life, to track the varied
movements of our heart without interference, going wherever it takes us.

But the mind chasing after feelings isn’t enough. At a certain point intellect is hi-
jacked. It circles around the same stories, trapped in old fears and resentments. To
break the spell, the doe must let herself be caught. She must stand in her vulnerability
and be pierced. We often avoid our own wounding with secondary feelings like anger
and self-pity. But opening to our source pain is a critical step in emotional mastery. As
psychologist John Welwood writes:

*“When we first open to our pain, it often feels as though we are bleeding. Yet this kind of emotional bleeding
helps awaken the heart, allowing vital energies in us that have become coagulated to circulate again. To let our pain
move in this healing way requires awareness, courage, and gentleness – being present with the pain instead of believ-
ing scare stories in our mind about where it might take us.”*⁶

We must join our pain with our warrior spirit; this is reflected in the image of
Hercules carrying the wounded doe on his shoulders. Of course he quickly runs
into Artemis. Something divine is about to happen. He stammers an explanation.
He tells the angry goddess about his madness, his wife and children, the labors
of King Eurytheus. Artemis is moved. Her heart breaks open with sympathy
and compassion. She heals the doe and lets the hero complete his labor.

She models empathy – which is the divine potency we unleash when we
awaken to our pain. Empathy is the real treasure in our Cancer
house. During difficult and transformative years ahead, I
suspect we will need a lot of it.

Notes . . . (THE SIGNS AND HERCULES' TWELVE LABORS

1 . by Rick Fields; see
[http://www.dzogchen.org/teachings/
www/20000606.htm](http://www.dzogchen.org/teachings/www/20000606.htm)

2 . Harriett Augusta Curtiss, "The Twelve Labors of
Hercules According To Occultism," excerpted from Key of
Destiny (Kessinger Publishing's Rare Reprints).

3 . Warren Berger, "Lost in Space," Wired, February 1999, pp.
76 – 81.

4 . Robert Bly, in The Rag and Bone Shop of the Heart, A Poetry
Anthology, Robert Bly, James Hillman and Michael Meade, editors, 96
HarperPerennial 1993, pp. 195

5 . Andrei Voznesensky, "Darkmotherscream," translated by
Robert Bly and Vera Dunham, in The Rag and Bone Shop of the
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6 . John Welwood, Journey of the Heart (HarperCollins,
1990), p. 82.

*Editor's note: 2008 – 2024

LEO


WRESTLING WITH THE LION

"ARE YOU THE ONE?"


This is the central question of the 1999 science fiction action film, *The Matrix*. It's what everyone wonders about the moody loner played by Keanu Reeves. By day, he's Thomas Anderson, an unassuming programmer and corporate drone; by night, he's a brilliant computer hacker named Neo. Sentient machines have taken over the Earth, hijacking humans into an alternate reality while draining energy from their slumbering bodies. A few have managed to escape the collective dream. When Neo joins their resistance movement, the rebels wonder if he's the hero the Oracle predicted would appear. Is he the One humanity's been waiting for? Is Neo destined to save mankind? These are serious questions. Surely only movie heroes get asked such questions.

Luckily, the world's fate doesn't rest so heavily on our shoulders. This leaves us time to tweet about the amazing pastrami we just had for lunch. At night, the thoughts drifting into our sleep are of unanswered e-mails, soccer carpools, our dwindling retirement account, and who took our iPod. But occasionally, perhaps when a moonbeam falls just so through the bedroom window, our inner hero is roused. Ancient as Gilgamesh and bold as Hercules, he goes stamping through our dreams. He's the part of our psyche determined to kill the monster, find the magic tree, or do whatever it takes to revitalize the kingdom. By day, we can find him in our horoscope. Just look where LEO resides. In LEO'S house, with our LEO planets, and through LEO'S ruling light, the SUN, we're called to a special destiny, something only we can do. It's LEO that makes us hope and wonder: ARE WE THE ONE THE WORLD IS WAITING FOR?

In *The Matrix*, Neo has a mentor who believes in him: Morpheus nearly has Neo believing in himself, too, until the Oracle calls our hero's bluff. In her tenement kitchen, this cigarette-smoking, cookie-baking Wise One looks Neo up and down, then takes his hand and says, "BUT YOU ALREADY KNOW WHAT I'M GOING TO TELL YOU ..." "I'M NOT THE ONE," Neo replies. She nods her head. "SORRY, KID. YOU'VE GOT THE GIFT. BUT IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE WAITING FOR SOMETHING. YOUR NEXT LIFE, MAYBE, WHO KNOWS."

OURAGEOUS, CREATIVE, CONFIDENT, AND PROUD ARE TYPICAL KEYWORDS FOR LEO. Doubtful never makes the list. But doubting one's gifts may be as integral to LEO's journey as its pride. We'd rather think of sunny LEO days, swinging our feet from the branch of a shimmering tree, dreaming and believing in our greatness. But over time, LEO's golden road gets splashed with grit and grime. There are goals we didn't achieve, jobs that slipped through our fingers, lovers we failed to excite, plus a dreary pile of chores to perform, tasks that any commoner could do. Maybe we're not so special after all. We visit psychics and astrologers to get re-inspired about our lives; this momentarily cheers us up, then wears off. We're back to feeling average and non-heroic. What good are fortune-tellers anyway?

The Oracle in *The Matrix* takes the art of fortune-telling to a whole new level. There's a smart twist to her denial of Neo's gifts. He is the One. But she knows that hearing this news from her won't call that talent out of him. "BEING THE ONE," says the Oracle, "IS LIKE BEING IN LOVE. NO ONE CAN TELL YOU YOU'RE IN LOVE; YOU JUST KNOW IT, THROUGH AND THROUGH, BALLS TO BONES." Astrology draws a similar connection, locating both love and heroism in LEO. In fact, so similar are the energies of romance and heroic engagement that people often confuse them. They go to singles bars or draft clever profiles for Match.com, when all they really want is to know that they matter in this world.

IFE TOYS WITH US JUST AS THE WISE ONE TOYED WITH NEO. For long stretches, it withholds its validation. It challenges us to launch our hero's journey with no assurance that we'll succeed. LEO's gift is not that it makes us fearless, but that in spite of our doubt and fear, it sends us forward anyway. Says Major Gates in another fine movie, *Three Kings*, "FIRST YOU DO THE THING YOU'RE SCARED SHITLESS OF, AND THEN YOU GET YOUR COURAGE, NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND." This is the law of the Cowardly Lion, who proves his mettle with quivering voice and shaking knees. One of my favorite moments in the film *Kundun* is when the young Dalai Lama wonders, as the Chinese oppressors march toward Tibet, whether he really is the Dalai Lama; maybe the venerable monks made a mistake. We never know for sure if we're the One. But that very doubt forces us to reach inside and search for one of LEO's most important treasures: the power of our self-will. Finding that releases tremendous creativity.

This brings us to our LEO labor. Hercules is tasked with killing the lion that terrorizes the hills around Nemea. It's an awful beast, twice the size of a man and three times as deadly. This is the first of Hercules' twelve labors, and if it feels like a punishment to our hero, that's because it is. We might know the feeling. How many times have we gone into the big meeting or opening night or wherever it was we thought we could shine, feeling as eager as someone heading for a firing squad. We like to think of LEO's creativity as being all fun and games – but the warmth and childish joy of LEO generally arrive before and after its moment of heroism. Anticipation and victory generate heat, but in the middle comes the challenge. That's what it means to wrestle with the Nemean Lion: It's a metaphor for the creative process. It's about facing one's creative challenges head on.

HERCULES' STAR HAD FALLEN. He'd strangled a snake just after his birth and, throughout his childhood, had dazzled the world with his strength and charm. But then came the dark years. He went mad and killed his wife and children. How could he ever trust himself again? He's paying for that crime now, having to bow down to King Eurystheus, a small man with a big voice who barks orders to hunched-over servants. When the king claps his hands, the whole castle jumps. What Hercules doesn't know is that Eurystheus actually fears our hero and lies awake at night plotting to get rid of him. The king decides to give Hercules a challenge so monumental that he'll fail, after which he'll die: perfect!

When Hercules reaches the lion's territory, he takes lodging at the house of a poor workman, Molorchus, who offers to perform a ritual sacrifice for a safe lion hunt. Hercules tells the man to wait thirty days. If Hercules returns with the lion's skin, they'll both make the sacrifice to Zeus. If Hercules doesn't come back, Molorchus should sacrifice in the hero's name. It makes sense that LEO's victory should belong to Zeus. At their best, LEO triumphs feel like divine interventions; we perform beyond ourselves, as though possessed by a god. How many actors have hugged their Oscar and given it up to the Man Upstairs? But when we lose with LEO, the shame and failure are ours alone. Given our pride, these stakes are high.

Hercules has several encounters with the lion. He shoots it with poison arrows, but they fall away without piercing its skin. He throws his club and it bounces back. He drops a boulder on the lion; it shatters. Hercules is learning: The lion's skin is impervious. So, now he must get creative. Hercules discovers the animal's lair and explores it while the lion is away. For weeks, he studies the lion, tracking it, observing it, getting so intimate with its movements and temperament that you could say he becomes one with it, like an actor losing himself in a part. All sense of being punished has disappeared.

To work this way with LEO, we must come into our hearts. That's LEO's source and destination. When our work is heart-centered, we enter a focused and exhilarating timelessness, so present to the moment that we act spontaneously in naturally creative ways. We might even surprise ourselves with genius. Hercules would never have planned to strangle a ferocious animal twice his size, yet he watches himself rush toward the beast, and suddenly his hands are around its neck. Hercules feels the lion yielding to his strength. It's an exquisite moment, more like love than death. So, when he sees the animal's lifeless body, Hercules is compelled to honor it. He cuts off the pelt with the lion's own claws and wears the hide back to Eurystheus.

HERCULES GOES INTO THE LION'S DEN STRIPPED OF TOOLS. He takes nothing other than himself - emphasizing that what we do in LEO is self-expression. But we must ready ourselves. We must work at our art, whatever that is. Then one day, when we're unselfconscious and true, a test will come that will cause the hero's kundalini to rise and overtake us. At that moment, we will be the One. It will feel like love. It will feel like fear. It will be big, spontaneous, childlike, exuberant, and vulnerable. It will feel like LEO, through and through, balls to bones.




Me and My Shadow

I wasn't always such a cheerleader for LEO. In fact, before I knew much about astrology, I knew one thing: I didn't like LEOs. My ex-husband was a LEO SUN, and so were many of the creative types we hung out with – dancers, musicians, and performance artists – always showing off and grabbing center stage. LEOs, I decided, were just tap-dancing toddlers disguised as adults, forever stamping, singing, and crying, “LOOK AT ME! LOOK AT ME!”

Imagine my surprise, years later, when I discovered that I have a LEO Moon. It was hidden in my 12th-house closet, where what the psyche rejects is kept. I was projecting, hating in LEO friends what I couldn't bear about myself. Perhaps I paid a steep price for being too kingly in a prior life. As a child, whenever I won a school election or an award, I wanted to crawl under a rock when my mother (the theatrical stand-in for my LEO Moon) oohed and aahed, calling me “The Big Cheese.” I wanted attention, but when I got it, I squirmed. So, in later years, when I saw others soaking up the spotlight, I considered their displays embarrassing and egotistical.

Every sign has its shadow. LEO's can be childish, narcissistic, arrogant, overbearing, even cruel. King Eurystheus is a good example of LEO's darker side. He's LEO as tyrant, raising himself up by putting others down. You might say there's too much pride in King Eurystheus, but actually, there's not enough. An outer expression so exaggerated suggests a corresponding lack of inner spirit. A self so huge on the outside must feel inwardly impoverished. In the story, King Eurystheus is shocked to hear that Hercules succeeds in vanquishing the Nemean Lion. When our hero enters the city, the king jumps into a large clay jar and hides. For the next eleven labors, Eurystheus sends his orders by messenger, unable to meet the hero eye to eye.

The Nemean Lion is an expression of LEO's shadow, too, representing the primitive drive of ego. LEO needs this beast in large doses, since only such raw and passionate energy can fuel its ambitions. Royal LEO expects to be the best at whatever it does. Expectations so grand require an impervious skin. The arrows bouncing off the Nemean Lion depict just how powerfully ego can defend itself from others. Yet, the ego can also be cruel, which is why people often worry about their egos. When I encourage clients to sing their own praises, to express some LEO pride in their accomplishments, most demur. They don't want to look too full of themselves. But we should take our cue from Hercules. By wrestling with the lion, he is learning to master himself. Hercules' LEO labor is a metaphor for the creative process – and for the way LEO must learn to control its own childish, selfish, and fearful impulses. When we bring our inner beast under control, we can wear the ego as a temporary skin without fully identifying with it. We can take the necessary risks without worrying about what others will think of us. We can be gentle, warm, charismatic, and generous. The same message appears in LEO's Tarot card, “Strength,” in which a calm woman holds open a lion's jaws.


EO'S NEED FOR VALIDATION IS BOTH A CURSE AND A BLESSING. In some ways, it's an evolutionary advantage. A child who gets attention is a child who will survive. But what about the children who grow up, enter the workplace, and demand that bosses and co-workers notice and appreciate them? When I worked in the corporate world, the employees often looked like a moody sea of children, for whom a mere paycheck was never enough. They required the company's love, affection, and applause, too. On any day, I could tour the department floors and find someone sitting glumly at their computer. Their work was obviously unsatisfying, and yet I'd later hear that what burned them most was that nobody seemed to notice what they did.

This is not just a corporate problem. African wise man Malidoma Somé has observed: "WHETHER THEY ARE RAISED IN INDIGENOUS OR MODERN CULTURE, THERE ARE TWO THINGS THAT PEOPLE CRAVE: THE FULL REALIZATION OF THEIR INNATE GIFTS, AND TO HAVE THESE GIFTS APPROVED, ACKNOWLEDGED, AND CONFIRMED"¹ Let's add this insight to the Oracle's teaching. First, we must recognize and believe in our gifts. Then, we need them confirmed in the outer world. This is Joseph Campbell's hero's journey in a nutshell. We are called, mentored, and tested, helped by spirits and tested again; we prove ourselves via a supreme ordeal and then are received by our community with honor, offering them our boon.

This is why Aquarius, sign of community, is the zodiacal complement to LEO. The two need each other. The community needs its heroes, and heroes need their communities. Otherwise, after our heroic tests and trials, we would have nowhere to return with our treasure. Again from Malidoma Somé: "OUR OWN CONFIRMATION OR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF OURSELVES IS NOT ENOUGH. THE NEED TO BE ACKNOWLEDGED BY THE SOCIETY IS SO PRIMAL THAT IF IT DOES NOT HAPPEN IN THE VILLAGE, TOWN, OR NEIGHBORHOOD, PEOPLE WILL GO OUT SEARCHING FOR IT."²

To keep their people from wandering off, indigenous cultures have often formalized such acknowledgments through initiation rites or by conferring sacred names that bear witness to an individual's gifts. Yet, the ritualized acknowledgments of modern culture are far too generic to fulfill our yearning. We may get degrees or certificates, earn so much money, or garner some title, but such things cannot confirm why we were born here now. This may be why there's such a cultural fascination with celebrity and fame. The emptiness of our unacknowledged souls has grown so big that only mega-stars can carry our collective shadow. Perhaps our fame madness would subside if we could balance our heroic fantasies with more training in community. Where are the bumper stickers that say, "HAVE YOU WELCOMED YOUR NEIGHBOR'S GIFTS TODAY?"

One summer in my corporate world, the grumbling for appreciation got so loud that we convened a fact-finding committee to uncover strategies for boosting employee morale. Books with titles like 1,000 Ways to Appreciate Your Employees were consulted. In the end, everyone had a different opinion on what would work; eventually the group disbanded with no clear findings. A few managers resolved to keep "Atta-boy" lists to ensure that they regularly praised their grumpiest team members. I remember one frustrated manager telling me she was confronted by a sour employee with "YOU NEVER SAY ANYTHING POSITIVE" JUST ONE DAY AFTER SHE'D GIVEN HIM FIVE "GREAT JOB!" remarks.

WHAT FINALLY QUELLED THE LOW MORALE SURPRISED US ALL. We simply forgot about the whiners and began promoting the winners. Our company's booming sales meant that department workloads were getting too unwieldy; we couldn't rely on individuals to bear the burdens equally. So, we created tiers of responsibility and singled out the top performers. Raising some employees above their peers worried the managers, fearing this would bring new frictions and resentment. Instead, the promotions were met with a collective sigh of relief. Across the board, morale improved.

In retrospect, I see it was because we'd finally given the hero's journey its due. Appreciating people who lack a meaningful challenge is like the proverbial Chinese meal: An hour later, they're hungry again. But now we had put a meaningful garland around the special ones. Departments were now marked with paths - for calling, mentoring, testing, and honoring - suggesting future hero's journeys for those willing to answer the call. And those less motivated, perhaps even fearful of the journey, enjoyed protection from their new department heroes. The whole community gained.



Everyday Heroics

One night, when my son was six years old, he said: "MOM, DON'T MOVE AND DON'T SCREAM. THERE'S A MOUSE HEAD IN THE KITCHEN. DON'T LOOK AT IT, I'LL CLEAN IT UP." Branden knew I freaked out at the half-eaten or almost dead field mice the cat brought in. Usually he was just as scared as I was. This time, all by himself he got the broom from the garage, found a grocery bag, and swept the mouse head into it. It was odd, though. I'd spent the last hour in the kitchen cooking dinner - you'd think I would have seen the mouse. The cat was locked outside; she couldn't have brought it in. I asked Branden what the mouse head looked like. He described the little eyes, the little ears, the bones sticking out of its neck. "ARE YOU SURE IT WAS A MOUSE?" I asked. "YES ... OR MAYBE IT WAS LETTUCE, IT WAS DARK. NO - DEFINITELY A MOUSE." Ah, it was probably from the dinner salad, a radicchio leaf fallen to the floor.

Mouse or lettuce, Branden was my hero just the same. In real life, this is how most of our lion-wrestling moments come. Movies, myths, and stories tend to collapse a hero's life into one colossal act - as though one great moment were all we needed to redeem ourselves or express a lifetime's bounty of gifts. Does the fighter have just one victory? Will one creative act, no matter how huge, exhaust LEO's hunger for self-expression? Real life brings an abundance of heroic peaks. They may seem ordinary against the fictional heroic scale, but our real-life hearts still pound. A challenge is a challenge.

And sometimes, despite our best efforts, the recognition doesn't come. My cat presents me with her mouse, a gesture of her love and prowess. She expects me to be impressed; instead, I scream and chase her from the house. The hero works for recognition but cannot control when or why it comes. Sometimes it's lack of skill that denies our prize. Sometimes it's just timing. Brilliant books can make the bestseller list, but plenty of lousy books are on it, too. And many excellent books go unpublished. How many great artists were ignored and impoverished in their lifetimes? Admiration and applause are a mystery. Though LEO craves these, they're not the best motives for its authentic creativity. Consider the following story of an unusual Chinese tree.

On the Hill of Shang, a man discovers a tree so massive that, if a thousand horses take shelter underneath it, its shade could cover them all. The man wonders, "WHAT KIND OF TREE IS THIS? IT MUST HAVE SOME EXTRAORDINARY USE." Looking up, he notices that its limbs are twisted and small, unfit for making furniture or houses. Looking down, he sees that the trunk is pitted and rotten, unfit for making coffins. He licks one of the leaves; it blisters his mouth. He sniffs. Its odor is foul. He leaves the tree and goes on his way.

Of course, the tree's very uselessness has allowed it to grow, unexploited, into its majestic shape and size. But perhaps the tree holds other secrets, and someday an even finer purpose will be revealed. Maybe one day it will be "THE ONE." In the meantime, it can only be itself. We are like this. We each have a spirit that's special and rare. It's the only gift we have to offer. And it's our only chance to be the One, whether or not the rest of the world currently agrees.



Notes

1 . Malidoma Patrice Somé, *The Healing Wisdom of Africa*, Tarcher Putnam, 1999, p. 27.
2 . Ibid.

VIRGO



RESTORING ORDER WITH VIRGO

♈ In September 2007, when gas prices and terrorists were all we had to fear, when CEOs could lay off half the factory and still award themselves fat bonuses without making news, when the government was a Detroit muscle car with a drunken frat boy at the wheel, glaciers were melting and health care costs rising. It was then that Saturn entered meticulous Virgo, the best possible zodiac sign for cleaning up a mess.

In November 2008, boosted by the Uranus opposition and its electricity of hope, Saturn sent millions of us to the ballot box where we elected our first Pluto-in-Virgo president, with his Mars in this hard-working analytical sign too

Being a Leo, Obama has a lion's charisma. But his well-run campaign showcased the power of Virgo's cool discipline and planning, something we clearly needed as homes were foreclosed, banks toppled, and 401K's deflated like carnival balloons. Saturn-in-Virgo sent worried families to their kitchen tables to crunch the numbers and trim unnecessary expenses. In some cases it packed their boxes and moved them into tent cities or relatives' back bedrooms. Saturn entered pragmatic Virgo just as our world collapsed. It took our wobbly legs and set them on the long slow road to a comeback, ever mindful that the problems which took years to create would require patient, persistent, Virgoic efforts to resolve.

Saturn exits Virgo in late October this year*, to make a brief return between April and July 2010. Before Saturn's done, we should sing the praises of this transit. In contrast to the sparkling self-importance of its preceding sign Leo, Virgo is modest, useful, methodical, and organized. It doesn't dance around waiting for appreciation. It simply rolls up its sleeves and gets to work, undaunted and efficient as my Roomba vacuum cleaner which daily whirs through the house and leaves it singing with new energy. Saturn in Virgo is like that; it steadily makes things better. It serves. It studies the details. It promises that if we take one small step, then another, and just keep moving, we'll eventually find ourselves beyond the pit of despair, anchored in a better reality.

Not everyone's world fell apart during Saturn's transit. For many I know it brought welcome improvements, prompting big and small changes in Virgo directions, toward greater order, discrimination, and purity. One of my friends entered a monastery. Another launched a de-cluttering business. My son voluntarily began eating healthier foods. With Virgo in my 1st house of appearance, Saturn nudged me into the best physical condition I've enjoyed in awhile, second only to twenty-nine years ago when Saturn was last in Virgo.

In my twenties, this transit encouraged new physical discipline. I'd had little interest in health until Saturn entered my 1st house and I was suddenly motivated to fast, cleanse, and exercise with a diligence bordering on fanaticism. Sadly in my fifties I can no longer muster the same intensity, yet Saturn wouldn't leave me alone. This time my already healthy diet became healthier through incremental shifts, reducing gluten one month, adding a fresh green drink the next. I went to the gym three to four times a week, without much fanfare and seemingly little improvement until finally a friend exclaimed, *"My god how you've changed!"*

Virgo is capable of extreme diligence, but more typically its miracles come through many small steps. These were among the ingredients making Obama's Saturn-in-Virgo campaign so ground-breaking. Its army of grass roots volunteers, knocking on doors, making phone calls and donating a mountain of small sums eventually wielded greater political power than the fat-cat big-money sources. It was nothing less than revolutionary, a word readily associated with Uranus but hardly ever Virgo or Saturn. So was it just the Uranus opposition to Saturn that brought about this big change? I wonder. In Kenya in the late seventies, Wangari Maathai's revolutionary Green Movement gained significant momentum during Saturn's Virgo transit. The Nobel Peace Prize winner had a simple Virgoic proposition: years of deforestation and damage to the country's rivers and topsoil could be overturned by one simple act – a woman planting trees, one seed at a time.

Virgo's archetypes include the Virgin, the Servant, and the Perfectionist. Pop astrology often collapses these images into the Librarian, the Secretary, and the Bookkeeper. There's nothing wrong with these occupations – I've happily worked at two of them myself. Yet they're usually received as unflattering Virgo stereotypes. Far from the juicy virgin, Virgo is seen as an uptight bespectacled spinster in supporting rather than leading roles. In a culture infatuated with Leo's performance and celebrity, Virgo's brilliance often goes unnoticed. Yet there's a reason Virgo follows Leo in the zodiac – not only to clean up its messes, but to lead us forward in new ways. Through small acts, Virgo accomplishes plenty. I remember from my corporate days that when good Virgos left the company, we often needed two new hires to fill their shoes.



Virgo's Formula for Success

Sadly, people are often disappointed to learn they have planets in Virgo. By comparison, its opposite sign Pisces is so transcendent and mystical that Virgo descriptors can sound rather dull. Pisces is intuitive and imaginative. Virgo is analytical and practical. Yet Virgo couldn't tackle a disorganized desk, a cluttered room, or a broken world without some belief in magic. Virgo's dreams of perfection are a kind of imagining that fuels its devotion and discipline. The pragmatism of earth signs may seem to deny their mysticism, but earth, as Nature, is too an expression of Divine Mind. Reflecting the Great Mystery, achievement-oriented Capricorn climbs mountains, sensuous Taurus lays us down in fields of flowers, and industrious Virgo brings a precision that keeps the world turning.

There's much in Nature to remind us of Virgo. Some flowers have such carefully timed routines that the botanist Carl Linnaeus suggested one could plant a floral clock, a circle of marigolds, daisies and water-lilies that by opening and closing their petals could keep the hours as perfectly as a clock's hands. The evening primrose knows to release its scent at the precise moment its pollinating moths take flight. And bees keep a perfect schedule of appointments, visiting as many as nine different plant species in a day, always arriving just as their nectar is released.

We might recall these images whenever we find Virgo organizing the spice drawer or correcting our grammar. The world runs on such efficiencies, and they're no less magical than Pisces' crystal balls. We can find Virgo's footprints all over sorcery, in crisp details like "eye of newt" or "tongue of toad." JK Rowling, creator of Harry Potter's wizard world, has a strong stellium of Virgo planets: the writer's Mercury, language-charming Venus, along with Moon, Jupiter, Uranus, and Pluto.¹ It was initially

rumored that Rowling "channeled" her plots and characters, but as reporters pried more deeply into her method, we learned that she conceived, outlined, and crafted the Potter series with a practical Virgo diligence, knowing while writing each book the steps every character would take in later volumes. Rowling's genius brought millions of technologically entranced children back to the joy of reading books. "Genius" is another word rarely linked to Virgo – but recently this has changed.

It should be no surprise that during Saturn's Virgo transit, several new books have appeared with a Virgo-friendly theme. Malcolm Gladwell's *Outliers*, Daniel Coyle's *The Talent Code*, and Geoff Colvin's *Talent is Overrated* argue that it's not good genes, raw talent, some divine spark or a high IQ that separates geniuses from the rest of us. It's practice. Research has shown that what distinguishes top concert pianists from second-tier performers and high school music teachers is simply how many hours they've practiced—at least ten thousand to be exact. The biographies of phenomenal successes like Tiger Woods, Bill Gates, and the Beatles have one thing in common. Before each made it big, these icons worked at their craft for over 10,000 hours, progressively refining their skills to reach nearly divine levels of performance.

"Practice makes perfect" has always been Virgo's formula for success. Virgo's focus on perfection improves the quality of our world. During my Venus research, I discovered that the (often unfairly disparaged) Venus-in-Virgos were sensuous connoisseurs of quality. They liked jobs well done, exquisite textures and fabrics, tasty and nutritious foods, beautiful landscapes, fine literature, music and art. Today when I picture Virgo's Virgin, I don't see an uptight librarian. I imagine a vibrant goddess, much like the one described below by a woman with Venus in Virgo:

"I once met a living goddess on the cobblestones of old town Zurich. She was an exotic-looking woman with deep set eyes that sparkled warmth and mischief at the same time. Silvery hair fell way down her back. Her shoes were stained orange and decorated in intricate delicate patterns. She became my mentor and opened my eyes to cultural imprinting and affectations. She had a great sense of humor and was

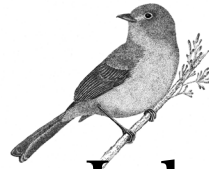
hilarious at imitating the proper Swiss women sitting across from us at a restaurant. She was not above throwing a milk pail over a friend's head, justifying her impulsiveness with myth and philosophy. She demanded we buy organic food for our tea house and scolded us severely if we attempted to cut corners. Her gatherings became regular occasions of celebration, introspection and dancing with the energies of any given moment. Her sun sign was Virgo, but there was nothing bookish or restrained or overly controlled about her."

Virgo holds us to high standards, but she's not always proper and prim. She can be quite determined and saucy, unafraid to throw a drink in somebody's face if the moment requires it. Virgo is a humble sign, but it can be humbling too, as anyone who's been on the receiving end of a Virgo tirade can confirm. Virgo is often maligned for its judgments and criticisms, but sometimes the humiliations we suffer through Virgo are necessary, in service to the gods. We should pay particular attention to the humiliations endured during Saturn's Virgo transit. These are especially significant and transformative—something the CEOs of the big three automakers discovered when they flew their private jets to Washington to request a congressional bail-out. Saturn's outrage was so strong that sufficiently humbled, the executives drove fuel-efficient cars on their next trip to Capitol Hill.

A Virgo friend sailed to new professional heights when Saturn was in Leo. Her confidence grew so large that she collided with her peers as Saturn changed signs and conjoined her Sun. She was quickly ostracized, spending months alone and full of doubt. After much soul-searching, she found a deeper source of confidence and eventually mended fences, wearing her authority in a more graceful, inclusive way. My son was horrified when Saturn in Virgo squared his Ascendant and he was dropped from his Advanced Placement English class, just one point away from the acceptable minimum. With Sagittarius rising, he's used to skating along. *"This is a life changing event,"* he swore. I was skeptical, but months later he studied for his Advanced Placement History exam with a diligence I'd never before seen. One of the worst humiliations I ever suffered came years ago when Saturn first conjoined my Virgo Ascendant. At a party, buoyed by wine and Virgo righteousness, I said something I shouldn't have said,

which cost me an entire circle of friends. The next year was agonizing. Turning to spirituality was the only way I survived my pain; of course that changed the rest of my life.

So what happened to you in the past two years? Did Saturn dump a milk pail on your head? Did you discover new dedication and focus? Where has your life improved? Whatever Saturn brought (and likely there were both lessons and triumphs), thank him for his Virgo gifts.



Hercules' Virgo Labor

What does Hercules learn from his Virgo labor? The assignment seemed easy enough: he had only to get Aphrodite's girdle from the Queen of the Amazons and bring it to King Eurytheus' daughter. The Amazons were a fierce tribe of warlike women, but Hercules, whose life was full of battles and monsters, was unafraid. He planned the perfect assault and set sail with his men. Unfortunately, during a brief stop at Paros, two of his men were murdered. This sent Hercules on a murderous rampage of his own, until the Paros citizens agreed to set things right; they offered two of their men to replace the two that were slain. When Hercules and his crew reached the Amazon kingdom, Queen Hippolyta sent a message: the gods had advised her to give Hercules the girdle without a fight and she was willing to do just that. Our warrior was not prepared for this! When a strong feminine presence yields to a strong masculine one, we might expect a potent and magical unity. Indeed this is one of the powers of Aphrodite's girdle - the ability to bring masculine and feminine into attraction and union.

Unfortunately Hera got wind of the matter. No fan of Hercules or of Aphrodite, the goddess spread a rumor through the streets that Hercules was planning to abduct the Amazon Queen. Hercules was already in the palace, heading up the steps, when he heard outside a furious clamor of horses, shouts and spears. He fell into doubt and his thoughts raced down familiar routes: *"Ambush! The Queen was lying! She never meant to yield the girdle."* Like an agitated teenager in over his head, Hercules rushed into the room and stabbed the Queen before she could say a word. He got the girdle just as he'd planned: by force.

On the way back home under a sunny sky, Hercules heard a distant and pitiful scream. He scanned the horizon and discovered a maiden lashed to a rock with a sea monster heading her way. Without thinking, Hercules jumped into the monster's path, speared it dead, and set the maiden free. The girl, named Hermione, had been offered up to appease the gods after her father had failed to pay the promised wages to two day-laborers, who were actually Apollo and Poseidon in disguise. Angered, Apollo had sent a pestilence and Poseidon roused a monster. To correct the situation, an oracle decreed that Hermione must be sacrificed. Now with the girl at his side, Hercules appealed to Zeus and the matter was set right with an exchange of horses. No further blood was spilled.

This is a Virgo story? It hardly sounds like one. It's so chaotic, with murders, a monster, a girdle, and a dead queen! For Virgo's labor we might have expected Hercules to clean the Augean stables or lop off Hydra heads till none were left - any number of jobs requiring patience, efficiency, organization, and analysis. But getting Aphrodite's girdle is the task Alice Bailey assigned to Virgo and I've been following her tradition for this series.² Too, I've learned that the more peculiar the story, the more wisdom it often contains. So what does this labor have to teach us about Virgo?

Hercules makes a mistake when he panics and kills the Queen, but when he saves Hermione's life he helps clear his karmic balance sheet. Cleaning up mistakes and restoring order is this labor's recurring theme. The Paros citizens must make amends to Hercules' crew. Hermione's father must rectify his sin against the gods. Virgo is all about fixing problems and restoring order. Life is messy. Without some force to set things right, where would we be? Virgo brings a useful and necessary intention, but its performance must be developed and refined - or it will create more problems than it fixes. Hercules conceives his plan, sets his course, and soon runs into circumstances he cannot control. That's when Virgo's real training begins.

When meticulous Virgo meets the unexpected, it can become as crazy as Hercules on his Paros rampage. He's similarly unstrung when he stabs the Queen. He's lost confidence and entered Virgo's dark side. Brittle and insecure when life veers from the plan, Virgo will bind itself in judgments and either hide or hurl itself in fury at the world. I remember a computer technician from my corporate days. With Virgo rising, Jim worked hard, often until the wee hours of the morning. His office was lined floor-to-ceiling with a meticulously organized array of tools, parts, manuals, and magazines. Jim was happiest when he felt useful. He loved fixing employee problems, but if you visited these same people after he left, they'd often be fuming and pulling their hair. Everyone complained about Jim. He was picky and obstinate, prone to arguing about insignificant details. After a slew of personality warnings, for the sake of the company's peace, this hard-working man was eventually fired.

As a mutable sign, Virgo is meant to adapt and adjust to the world, but it lacks some of the ease and good humor of its fellow mutables Gemini and Sagittarius. Virgo is fearful and cautious, about which Robert Hand makes an interesting speculation: *"It's almost as if Virgo is the result of the childish exuberant egotism of Leo encountering its first severe defeat"*³ Virgo does seem overly concerned about what's at stake. Its anxiety and self-doubt certainly interfere with its effectiveness. So what's the remedy?

Astrologers have a little saying for Virgo: *"Serve or suffer."* Suffering is painful, but service? Even without consulting a dictionary, we can sense this word's Latin origins: "to serve" originally meant "to be a slave." Serving implies we must give up something valuable: our time, our freedom, our dreams of big success. To serve can feel demeaning or self-negating, like we must forget about winning "American Idol" and volunteer instead at soup kitchens or build houses for the poor. In a culture that prizes individual creativity, suffering just might be preferable to serving like this.

Fortunately, Hercules' Virgo labor gives us a deeper view of service. That Hercules rescues Hermione is good work, but his act is nothing planned. The hero merely serves the needs of a moment that found him. This is Virgo at its best. Spontaneous, it liberates its skills to meet the present with effectiveness. Hercules lacks this ability at Paros and when the clamoring begins outside the Queen's palace. What makes him change?

After the Queen's murder, Hercules has gotten Aphrodite's girdle. In other words, he acquires the balancing strength of the receptive feminine. The girdle is an emblem for the Virgin at the heart of this sign – the part of us that's fresh, uncalculated, and willing. Through this deeper receptivity, we can more readily submit to the task at hand. We submit to it as a kind of destiny, without the suffering of resistance. Quite simply, we make ourselves available to the needs of our situation. We join the connected fabric of the world, doing what's required of us. This represents one of the earthiest components of this earth sign. It grounds us into our interdependence, the realization we are part of a living system bigger than ourselves alone.

After we explore the possibilities of self through Leo, through creative play and self-expression, Virgo moves us into a more practical engagement with the world. We discover we must serve – not just as non-profit volunteers – or as waitresses, hairdressers or librarians. Virgo's possibilities for service are as variable as people on the planet. Whatever our particular call to service, Virgo can empower our work with its humility, practicality, and dedication. Humility brings new balance to the ego that Leo strengthened. Practicality requires we take only necessary actions. Dedication delivers the capacity to become fully absorbed in our task. Whenever we're fully absorbed in the present moment, that's when the Virgo magic begins!



Notes

- 1 . Born on July 31 1965, Bristol England (no birthtime). See: http://famous-relationships.topsynergy.com/J_K_Rowling/AstroData.asp
- 2 . Alice A. Bailey, The Labours of Hercules (Lucis Press, 1974).
- 3 . Robert Hand, Horoscope Symbols (Whitford Press, 1981), p. 222.

*Editor's note: 2009





LIBRA AND THE PATH OF PERSUASION

"It's the wrong Moon!" I was walking across the lobby to pick up a fax when my water broke.

A circle of anxious coworkers gathered round and quickly jumped into action. They decided who would take me to the hospital and who would follow in my car, while I was focused on a single issue: *"My baby can't be born with a Libra Moon!"*

I'd been a professional astrologer for just three years, which means what I knew came mostly from books and the handful of charts that confirmed them. My books said that a child's Moon sign indicates the personality of his/her mother. Libra is a lovely sign, diplomatic, socially adept, artistic, refined, and relationship-oriented. But, moi?! I was a clumsy Sagittarian who liked her freedom and spoke her mind. My picture of a Libra Moon mom was framed in lace and smiles, as I imagined her fluttering around trying to keep everyone happy. If my son was going to be sitting in a therapist's office one day complaining about my flaws, it wouldn't be that I was too sweet, superficial, or vacillating. I was relieved when I finally saw Branden's chart. His Libra Moon was conjunct Jupiter—ah, there's the Sagittarian mother. Plus it was in the 10th house—yes, there's the unfortunate influence of my own anxious and ambitious Moon/Saturn square.¹

My faith in the heavens was restored. But astrology is filled with memes to inspire a new mother's dread. One day I learned that Libra Moon children incarnate in order to bring harmony to their parents. Yikes. His father and I had always hung together by a thread. Between my pregnancy hormones and his dad's Gemini dual mind about fatherhood, my womb often sloshed with discord. No wonder Branden's soul went flipping through the ephemeris searching for a Libra Moon, though I pitied the impossibility of my little one's assignment. Before Branden was three, his father and I split up.

Then I found this nugget: *"The mothers of Libra Moon children are idealists and romantics who are often terribly disappointed by their relationships."* Ouch. I come from a long line of women who've been bitterly disappointed in their men. I picture my ten-times-great-grandmother milking a cow and spitting as her fine-hatted husband rode out the gate. But a romantic? Me? Never!

Truth be told, astrology's maxims are as often false as they are true. So why do we keep circulating them? They do a good job of initiating astrol-ogers into a conversation with the archetypes. At first, the less we know the more we cling to our cookbook sentences (*"Of course it's accurate... astrologers have observed this for thousands of years!"*). Then experience seasons us and we realize that nothing is always true. Eventually we discard generalities altogether in favor of a living relationship with the archetypes. This is the real pleasure of astrology, observing the infinite creativity of planets and signs, as they show up in ways that are precise for each person. What makes the planets we serve so compelling is that they're never fully exhausted or revealed. Particularly in a child's chart, we should regard the natal placements as

empty chairs at a celebration, waiting for the chart's honored guests to arrive. The gifts they bring will be revealed slowly over time, including the curse from that inevitable uninvited guest, bringing the thing we didn't see, which of course keeps the story interesting and full of gods.

Over the years, I've kept a loose eye on my son's chart, waiting for the moments his deities wanted to appear. When Branden became very particular about the cut and colors of his clothes at eight, I applauded his refined Libran tastes. Now he's a rugby player who immerses himself for hours in video war games. But his Libra Moon regularly redecorates his den and occasionally tunes in episodes of the romantic reality show, "The Bachelor." When solicitors come to the door, his Moon ducks behind the couch. It can't bear that awkward moment of saying *"No, I'm not interested."* Not once has his Moon left for school without saying *"I love you Mom."* As for harmonizing his dad and me, Branden's Moon has succeeded at that too, for we've been quite cordially united as his co-parents.

The first gift I got from Branden was a small magnetic toy depicting a boy and girl balancing on a see-saw. From his preschool gift table he'd selected the perfect facsimile for Libra's glyph. Only now do I know what he was really doing. He was signaling me that my training in Libra was about to begin, for now that he's 17, I find myself all sweetness and lace, buying treats, bringing him snacks, and holding my tongue just to keep the peace. So here's another meme about Moon signs we might circulate: Our child's Moon is a warning; it predicts the kind of Mom that he or she will require us to become!

The Balance of Heaven

☿ Ruled by beautiful Venus, Libra is charming, harmonious, and sensitive. It's often said that Librans need relationships. Yet it's easy to find as many Libra Suns who live alone as those who are actually partnered. Consulting an astrology book often adds to the solo Libran's misery: *"It says I can only find myself through others... my drive is for relationship. So what happens if I don't have one?"*

For such a people-oriented sign it's strange that Libra is the only zodiac sign whose emblem is inanimate. Why didn't the ancients see in Libra's constellation something like the partnered twins of Gemini or Pisces' fish yoked back to back, an image of relationship? Instead its stars shimmer with an instrument, an object used for weighing things: a scale. Sumerians called this constellation Zib-ba An-na, meaning "the balance of heaven." Back then the autumn Sun rose in Libra when night and day were in equal measure, inspiring the belief that Libra was about, not partnering, but balance. Today we no longer view the Sun against its constellations, and even if we did, we'd find the autumnal equinox has precessed out of Libra. So how should we honor this sign? Where Libra activates our chart, should we endeavor to partner, balance, or to weigh things?

Such wondering back and forth, like a balance beam tipping up and down, is of course very Libra-like. This is a sign that can quickly jump around to multiple points of view. It also seeks to find what's fair and just and true. This is the mythological heritage of Libra's scale, which the Egyptians saw as the sacred Scale of Ma'at. Ma'at was the goddess of balance, justice, truth, and order. It was She who kept the universe from drifting into chaos. At death, a human's heart was measured on Her scales against a feather, to determine whether the individual had lived harmoniously with natural laws and could move on to the next realm. Souls too heavy were immediately devoured by demons.

The capacity to weigh something as delicate as souls and feathers is also a Libra gift. In fact, this uncommon sensitivity is the center pillar of Libra's balancing. Librans are profoundly aware of, and affected by, life's objects. Listen to how alive the world is for this woman with Venus in Libra:

"Soft, silky fabrics are a must. I buy things based on how they feel. I love things that sparkle and shine. I have lots of stones all over the house and see incredible beauty in them. I always have fresh flowers. I like candles but am careful with scents because my husband and I are both easily overwhelmed by anything too strong. Too many people overdo it. My back is my most sensitive erogenous zone. And less is more when it comes to touch. I like light feather touches."

It's understandable why Libra's delicate nature often seeks the soothing caress of beauty and harmony. Another name for its sensitivity might be "aesthetic sensibility," as Thomas Moore defines the term: *"Aesthetics in (its) primordial sense involves sensing the things of the world in their particularity and being affected by the many ways things present themselves."*² In other words, it's the capacity to feel deeply life's fabrics, scents, and stones.

The fairy tale which best describes Libra's sensitivity is Hans Christian Andersen's "The Princess and the Pea."³ One stormy night a beautiful stranger knocks on the castle door, requesting shelter. The Queen decides to test her. She measures her gentility with a bed of twenty mattresses underneath which she places a single pea. The girl tosses and turns. She climbs down after a sleepless night full of bruises, proving to the Queen she's actually a real princess (or someone with a stellium of Libra planets!).

We could say that Libra's mission is to send its sensitivity into a diversity of things. As it measures, it knows. As it comes to know the particular nature of what it meets, it joins with it. Sensing the nature of things promotes not only intimacy, but an appreciation for beauty, harmony, natural order and law. Clearly we confine Libra when talking about human relations only. Given how much there is in the world to sense, the objects of Libra's relating are surely limitless.

A Libra yoga teacher might be single, but still enjoy fulfillment by bringing a vibrant sense of balance to her own and her students' bodies. A Libra biologist may actualize herself by discovering the harmony in the bacteria of Petri dish. A recording engineer might come alive at the sound board, listening with his Libra sensitivity for the moment one track should enter and another one fade. Ultimately, this aesthetic practice leads the Libran to the Soul. Writes Moore again, *"The human soul longs for union with its matrix..."* and a *"vital, sensitive aesthetic sense is the means by which the human soul finds (its) reunion, (its) intimacy to the world."*⁴

Seen this way, all our relations might become the means for self-discovery. Not the small self of ego, but the larger Self, the Anima Mundi that joys to meet itself in varied forms. An artist friend tells me of a sculpture class she once took. All eyes were trained on the same model, yet later the teacher showed how each had in some way sculpted features from his own face. We long through Soul to find ourselves in others, because on some level we understand that we are one with all. When we allow our aesthetic sensitivity to truly touch the world, we heal our soul's painful separation. We are at last in harmony.

Delicate Libra has its shadow too. It can compromise too much. It can befuddle itself with indecision. All air signs can get lost in their thoughts. Like air, thoughts can travel far; they can also equivocate and skip right past Libra's aesthetic mission. The mind can facilitate the understandings that good relationships require, but it can also fabricate projections and abstractions, concepts that inhibit genuine relating. In Andersen's fairy tale, before that stormy night when the princess arrives, the prince had traveled the globe searching for a real princess. He never found one. Possibly his mind was in the way, overwhelming his capacity to sense authentic presence in others. This reminds me of a man I know whose Sun is in the 7th house, Libra's natural home. Paul is in his mid-thirties, has never been married, and for as long as I've known him has been "looking." Earnestly. He's taken out ads in the personals columns, joined internet matchmaking sites, gone on speed dates, and taken several workshops on relationships. He's gone on plenty of dates, but they never seem to work out. *"Her breasts were too small,"* he tells me. *"Her eyes were too eager,"* or *"She doesn't like Fellini,"* or *"The way she danced was strange."*

Airy Libra inspires our visions of prince or princess Charming, our "ideas" about relationship, but without the passion of fire to send us into

the other's arms, or the emotionalism of water to bond us in all our vulnerability, Libra can sit in the netherworld of indecision for a long time. A friend with a Libra Moon is always wondering if she's really in love, if this one's The One. *"How do you know?"* she keeps asking me. For a Libran it's sometimes hard. One downside to Libra's perpetual weighing and balancing is the inability to settle its mind, not just about relationships, but about many things. My father has a Libra Sun, Moon, and Jupiter in his 10th house of career, and now in his eighties, he's still not sure what he wants to do with his life.

Dad married an Aries, my mother, who more often than not took the lead, establishing the goals and agenda, but for every new adventure she launched, my Libra father tugged from the other side. His way of bringing balance to the relationship was to match her optimism with his pessimism, her commitment to this plan with his sudden desire to do that one. She acted, and he reacted. He resisted her like crazy, but followed wherever she went. The agreeable, dependent, peace-at-any-price Libra is one way to partner, but a reactive, argumentative Libra may be just as deeply bonded. The Librans who push others away are no less sensitive than the ones who draw them near.

But we've stayed away from Hercules too long. This is his series after all! What can his Libra labor teach us? Our hero must capture the Erymanthian Boar, a terrible beast that crashes around the slopes of Mount Erymanthus, attacking men, gouging animals, and ravaging the forest with his tusks. It's on this mission that Hercules makes a drastic mistake: he shoots the fateful arrow that leaves immortal Chiron with an incurable wound. It happens during a visit to his centaur pal Pholus, who lives in a cave on Mount Erymanthus. Delighted to see his old friend, Pholus serves Hercules roast meat and eats his own meat raw. Soon both are thirsty for wine, but Pholus is reluctant to open the cask as it belongs to all the centaurs. *"Aw, go for it!"* urges Hercules. *"They won't mind."*

But the forest centaurs catch the scent of wine and are quickly furious. They rush toward the cave armed with rocks and trees. Hercules grabs his bow and shoots down a few, then chases a small band heading towards Chiron's cave. Hercules sends a barrage of arrows into the group. An arrow passes through one centaur's arm and stops in Chiron's knee. On discovering this, Hercules is aghast. Chiron had been his teacher. In fact the very poison on the arrow's tip was an ingenious formula Chiron had developed. Hercules pulls the arrow out and applies one of Chiron's balms to the wound, though both teacher and hero know this is futile. The pain will go on forever for the immortal centaur. Meanwhile a curious Pholus has picked up the lethal arrow. It slips from his fingers and pierces his foot. Instantly he's dead.

Soft as a Feather

We might have hoped that Libra's story would be more genteel! Shouldn't our hero have been required instead to attend Aphrodite's Charm School for lessons in manners and dance steps? In our Libra house we want life to be light, harmonious and joyful, but this labor reminds us of another reality. Often enough when we open our sensitive Libran hearts, we meet discord and pain. Somebody does something stupid. Or we do something stupid. Sharp words are exchanged. Somebody gets hurt. This happens often in relationships; even so, it's still widely believed that true love never hurts. Only in the realm of ideas can we love without ever suffering.

As John Welwood reminds us in his *Journey of the Heart*, *"A relationship that has any depth and power at all will inevitably penetrate our usual shield of defenses, exposing our most tender and sensitive spots, and leaving us feeling vulnerable – literally, 'able to be wounded.'"*⁵ It's what we do after getting hurt that most shapes our capacity to love. The desire to retreat and harden our hearts is understandable. But Chiron, a master teacher, models a different response. He forgives Hercules, accepts his wound, and offers to exchange places with Prometheus, who for the crime of bringing fire to mankind is chained to a rock with an eagle pecking at his liver. From one pain, Chiron is willing to step into another! Zeus is so impressed with Chiron's open-heartedness, that he releases Prometheus and sends Chiron into the heavens to become an immortal light and inspiration for mankind. What's the lesson from this master class? That love's pain can be transformative.

But Hercules still has his labor. With a heavy heart, he buries Pholus, leaves Chiron, and begins to track the Erymanthian Boar. Hercules tracks many wild beasts on his zodiac labors. Each is a useful clue for what must be mastered in the particular labor's sign. Why a boar for Libra? We could smile and conjure a pun between "boar" and "bore" or "boor" – two dinner guests that socially refined Libra cannot abide. But the real relevance of this beast lies in his back story. Erymanthus was a son of Apollo; Aphrodite blinded the boy after he saw her bathing. In grief and anger, Apollo sent the Boar to kill her beloved Adonis. This tit-for-tat could have gone on forever, as it sometimes does for Librans too. But Aphrodite spared the beast, leaving him to roam and ravage Mount Erymanthus, a symbol of the damage that wounded hearts can do.

"In truth," writes Wellwood, "*the heart can never break, for it is already by its nature soft and receptive. What actually breaks open is the defensive shell around the heart that we have constructed to try to protect our soft spot.*"⁶ Learning to live from the heart without defensiveness may be the real aim of Hercules' Libra labor. After the death of Pholus and injury to Chiron, Hercules decides to meet the Boar without his bow and arrows. He is undefended and vulnerable. He wants to capture the beast without further violence. He follows it at a distance, then sensing opportunity, chases it into a snow drift where it sinks from its own weight. The snow cools the beast's heat and it willingly submits to the hero's chains. Hercules has become a master pacifist. He has tamed his own aggression and learned how to skillfully work with another's. On his journey, he's met his own flaws and life's harsh realities, but he's kept his heart open. This is genuine balance. In your Libra house and with your Libra planets, may you enjoy the same success.

Notes

- 1 . Jupiter is the ruling planet of Sagittarius so conveys many of its expansive, optimistic, and freedom-loving qualities when it's in aspect to the Moon. The natural ruler of the 10th house is Saturn. When the Moon is in the 10th, it carries some of the same pressure and responsibility as a Moon square Saturn.
- 2 . Thomas Moore, editor, *A Blue Fire, Selected Writings by James Hillman*, (Harper, 1989), pp. 290.
- 3 . Hans Christian Andersen, *The Complete Fairy Tales and Stories*, translated by Erik Christian Haugaard, (Doubleday, 1974), pp. 20-21.
- 4 . Moore, op. cit., p. 291.
- 5 . John Wellwood, *Journey of the Heart: The Path of Conscious Love* (HarperCollins, 1990), p 75.
- 6 . *ibid*, pp. 78-79.



SCORPIO

SCORPIO AND THE RICHES OF THE UNDERWORLD

♈ Scorpio gets a bad rap. You hear things like *"Watch out: Matthew is a triple Scorpio!"* or *"I'm nervous – Joe's ex-girlfriend has a Scorpio Moon."*

People expect behavior that's devious or perverse from this sign, though I think that's unfair. Even so, I can't resist sharing the following story. It happened to my friend Wendy as Pluto – Scorpio's modern ruler – opposed her 5th house Moon. When transiting planets meet natal planets, the archetypes might suddenly spring to life and enter our lives as real people. Fifth house transits can stage a romance, and sure enough, on the day this transit was exact, Wendy met a man eager to romance her. She was waiting for an elevator in an office high rise when he handed her his business card: he worked at the coroner's office. His eyes were intense. *"During the day I cut into corpses,"* he said, *"and at night I dabble in black magic."* Standing much too close, he whispered that he could get a little voodoo doll that would make her crazy to have sex with him. His Sun sign? Scorpio, of course!

But I haven't met any Scorpions like that. They may be out there; however, the ones I know are about as twisted and diabolical as the average surgeon, therapist, or tax consultant. So I'm sympathetic when a Scorpio comes somewhat defensively into my office, mumbling *"I know I've got the same sign as Charles Manson but most of what I read sounds scary and not true of me."*

This sign's clichés are creepy. Pick up a pop astrology book and you'll find that having Scorpio planets can make you secretive, controlling, vengeful, power-mad, paranoid, obsessive, and over sexed. They can also bring you passion, determination, resourcefulness, and a keen intuition – but these positive Scorpio traits aren't on the tip of most people's tongues. After all, this is the sign of scorpions, snakes, and vampires. It rules tyranny, quagmires and rotting garbage; also: the underworld, death, and body parts we don't openly discuss (the colon, anus, and genitals).

When people talk astrology at parties, rarely do the Scorpios cheer and “high five!” each other the way other signs do. Yet theirs is one of the most powerful signs of the zodiac. Focused on transformation, Scorpio holds the keys to life, death, and rebirth. It digs deep, solves mysteries, heals sickness, saves lives, builds wealth, and surrenders to high-voltage ecstasy. It governs depth psychology, metaphysics and magic. Without it we’d be hapless amateurs when struggling against our unconscious demons or bargaining with the powers from invisible realms.

It’s strange that a sign so concerned with control would do such a poor job of marketing its own gifts; perhaps there is method to this madness. Like a magician skilled in misdirection, Scorpio may want us distracted with its creepier expressions. When cultural ecologist David Abram studied Indonesian magicians and shamans, he was surprised that nasty rumors often swirled about them, spread by the very people these healers routinely cured.¹ The villagers whispered that the dukuns danced with demons or would recite their spells backward at night to reverse their daytime cures. Curiously, the shamans did nothing to dispel suspicion. Eventually Abram understood why. Community fear bought the magicians a precious gift: privacy and the space to do their deeper work.

Scorpio needs space for its deep work too, unlike the sign that precedes it, beautiful and charming Libra, that graceful doyenne of harmony and smooth surfaces. Scorpio is fascinated with what’s underneath the surface. Libra throws open the curtains and invites others in, but Scorpio prefers the shadows, comfortable with what people avoid or hide. It overturns the rock and studies the wriggling creatures underneath. Like a root tip poking through the dirt, or the worm feeling its way to the rotting corpse, Scorpio thrives on the riches of the underworld. This is why those with Scorpio planets make such good therapists, researchers, and mystery writers; also detectives, claims adjusters, surgeons, satirists, investors, and tax accountants – not to mention, the occasional devil worshipper or serial killer. We may not always know what our Scorpio friends are thinking – and that may be just how they like it.

Every sign corrects the weaknesses of its preceding sign. Libra can be superficial, apathetic, and vacillating; Scorpio is anything but wishy-washy. Its judgments are firm. Its style is tenacious. As a water sign, it’s motivated by emotion, as is Pisces and Cancer, though each sign maneuvers in its own way. If we say that imaginative Pisces floats like a dreamy mist, and nurturing Cancer rolls like a soft and nourishing stream, then Scorpio pools as ground water, powerful, sustaining, and unseen. The water element is sensitive and intuitive, but Scorpio is also tough. Robert Hand says it’s the only water sign that’s willing to fight² (although I know a few Cancers who might disagree).

Scorpio’s emblem is the scorpion, an eight-legged predator with a venomous sting. When Gaia learned that Orion was planning to slaughter her beloved wild beasts, out of all her myriad creatures, she chose the scorpion to attack him. The mighty hunter ran all the way to the ocean. Artemis eventually killed Orion – some say with an arrow, others claim it was the scorpion she sent that did the deed. Eventually the huntress repented and tearfully granted Orion immortality in the stars. But there was the scorpion waiting in the constellations; still on the case. Rising as Orion sets and setting as he rises, even now Scorpio is scuttling through the heavens, forever in pursuit.

Scorpio’s sting is unnerving, but this sign’s intensity can be quite beneficial. With it we can revive projects and partnerships weakened by half-heartedness or fear. Considering what may have slipped through our fingers over the years, we might agree that tenacious Scorpio is a style worth cultivating. Whether or not we have Scorpio planets, we all have Scorpio in our chart somewhere, plus an 8th house, this sign’s natural home. When planets or progressions move through these areas, “doing” Scorpio may be necessary. Particularly if we aspire to wholeness, we should be willing to cultivate every sign – as a mode of being, a style of perception, another angle on the truth. Yet it’s wise to be cautious with Scorpio. Like Mickey Mouse as the overreaching magician’s assistant in *The Sorcerer’s Apprentice*, we could fall victim to the very forces we hope to control. Scorpio’s power can surge to extremes. Its focus can lock into obsessive loops. Its ruthlessness can sting itself in the end. Or so the stories go. Let’s see what Hercules discovers on his Scorpio mission, when he must kill the nine-headed Hydra of Lerna.

In Greece, south of Argos, on a narrow strip of land between Mount Potinos and the sea, lies a storied region of abysses and springs. There through the bottomless waters of Lerna, Dionysos entered and returned from the underworld. There the fifty daughters of Danaus decapitated their husbands and buried their heads. Guarding this abyss is a giant serpent known as the Hydra – or water snake – though some call her the murderous bitch of Lerna. She has nine heads; one is indestructible and immortal. Her breath is deadly, as is her poisonous venom. Hercules is eager to meet her. With his nephew Iolaus by his side, Hercules locates her lair and shoots flaming arrows into the abyss. Out she slithers, furiously hissing and spitting. Hercules charges forward; her heads writhe and reach for him. He chops off one head. Before it hits the ground, two heads grow in its place! Meanwhile the Hydra wraps herself around his leg, and a crab begins attacking his trapped foot. He can't escape, but he doesn't want to. Furiously, Hercules starts chopping heads as fast as they keep multiplying. It's a stand off. But the Hydra seems to be winning.

Such are the steel nerves of this sign. It stands firm. It's got grit-backed by the competitive nature of Mars, Scorpio's traditional ruler. Why are there so many heads in this story? Lest we miss its deeper meaning, the gods wants us to know that this is a tale about consciousness. The labor begins with Hercules shooting the arrows of conscious awareness into the darkness, exposing an unconscious demon. The Hydra represents Scorpio's shadow. With her many heads in the dark, she depicts the twisted memories, desires, and thoughts we don't often see or admit we have. Hercules models the right response. Don't recoil from what comes to light: we must go after it. His first instinct is to kill it—which is the rational mind's usual reaction to unpleasant shadow material. Our hero quickly learns that what he chops off only grows stronger. This is an important law of underworld physics: what we resist or repress we will energize. As the Hydra's heads multiply, we have a chilling portrait of Scorpio in the grip of its own obsessions.

But there is more. The serpent also depicts the alert presence of Scorpio's deeper intuition, the way it seems to have ears in all directions and eyes in the back of its head. When our Scorpio planets are seized with determination, we could say there's an inner Hydra empowering them. She is the potent force behind Scorpio's obsessions and drives, also its

uncannily accurate hunches. What really sends the jealous Scorpio lover into a fit of violence? What nails the Scorpio detective to that thirty-year-old murder case? The stalker obsessed with a celebrity may not be so different from the Scorpio novelist gripped by the murmuring world of his characters. The jealous lover, the driven detective, the novelist writing for days without sleep—all are Hydra-fueled. This power can be as constructive as it is destructive.

Storytellers typically describe the Hydra as foul and loathsome, yet this is a Scorpio tale. That means there's more to it than what meets the eye. Scorpio is the sign of the "occult" after all – a word whose Latin root means to conceal or hide. We should ask what hides behind the Hydra's foul and deadly breath. She is a serpent. To an initiate of the mysteries, this is code for sacred power. In cultures throughout the ancient world, snakes and serpents were revered as the guardians of immortality, shedding their skin when they got old, and thus rebirthing themselves. Snakes were emissaries of the Great Goddess, wisdom-keepers, holding the secrets to life and death. Snakes have been associated with prophecy, their venom used for mystical trances. Cassandra, the great oracle at Delphi, was once found as a child with snakes licking her ears.

Though ruled by masculine Mars, Scorpio is a feminine sign. One of the deeper instructions of Scorpio's labor is to unite masculine and feminine, just as the sign draws its testosterone-driven ruler into the feminine mysteries. The labor is about reconciling the Hero with the Great Goddess. Indeed, with the Hydra coiled around his leg, we could say our hero is merged with her! But how does he hold his own against such power? This is the question inside each of our Scorpio planets, as they take us into painful love affairs, odd hobbies, unpleasant pasts, and other people's secrets. How does the focused and incisive masculine dance with the many-headed intuitions of the sacred feminine? Scorpio wants us to enter into her deep wisdom and absorb its essence without losing ourselves. But the ancient temples are far away. Initiates are no longer identified and taken to the priestess for proper training. Today most of us meet the potency in our Scorpio planets on our own. I have Mercury and Venus conjunct in Scorpio. I still remember the afternoon in college when these two made themselves known.

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It was one of those periods when I was living at the library. I'd shifted venues to my boyfriend's house, hoping to renew my concentration. After my boyfriend and roommates went out, I could focus on nothing but the stillness of the house. Suddenly I was startled into motion. Without the slightest idea why (though now I know it was the Hydra's prompting), I made a bee-line for my boyfriend's closet. Digging behind his hiking boots and tennis racket, I pulled out the stack of letters I didn't know he had written to the girl he'd been seeing behind my back. The letter on top was from her. She said she was returning his poetry and love letters because he lacked the courage to act on them. It might have consoled her to know that he had saved them - and that he'd never written poetry like that to me.

My Venus snake was aroused; no shrinking violet, she got him back. Eventually he married me. Ten years later, Mercury and Venus brought me hidden information again. I startled my husband by recounting a dream in which a sexy woman appeared. As I described her, he gulped. She looked just like the secretary I didn't know he was secretly in love with. It took months for this dream information to reach my conscious awareness. But when it finally did, my Venus snake was done; she let him go. Scorpio planets bring many transformations.

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It takes courage to poke after mysteries. The underworld is an uncomfortable place. It is also vast, containing so many things, the hidden letters of cheating lovers, the secrets of replicating viruses in a researcher's lab, what happened to that still-missing child, as well as the literal underworld where corpses decompose, and where gems, oil and ores are formed. There is truth down there. And wealth. It's not for nothing that Lord Pluto, god of the underworld, is also the god of lucre. Scorpio likes the power wealth can bring, and it appreciates what forms under pressure. Hence the interrogator, the psychotherapist, and the oil tycoon share a common bond. Yet whatever Scorpio unearths generally needs refining. Before one can cash out the treasure, transformation is required. Stones are split, the gems shaped and polished, ores are smelted and tempered.

Arduous as this work might be, it's certainly more straightforward than the refinement of matter from that inner world in which most of us toil. Our personal underworlds hold memories, repressed desires, our family complexes, the collective unconscious with its gifts and neuroses, all of which is bound-up energy and power. How do we make riches of it? Maybe Hercules can show the way. Remember that he brought assistance on his Scorpio mission. The sign which treasures its privacy instinctively knows that it can do more in partnership than alone, like the patient with her therapist, or the spiritual master who reaches higher levels of realization with his consort.

"Iolaus!" Hercules shouts. *"Take a flaming tree and hold it on the monster's neck just as I sever the head."* After nearly a forest is cleared, the Hydra's wounds are fully cauterized and no new heads grow back. Next Hercules slices off the immortal head and buries it underground, back in the underworld, where the serpent's eternal wisdom belongs. The hero dips his arrows into her blood, gaining the potency of her poison. He has successfully merged and received her teachings in life, death, and rebirth - until the next transformation is required.

In our Scorpio planets and houses, we all have wounds like the ones Iolaus cauterized with transformative fire. From these tender areas

vengeful heads can sprout. Or we can prevent their growth if we're willing to endure the pain that comes from touching them with awareness. At times this process feels just as death-defying as the meeting between Hercules, Iolaus and the Hydra.

"The general rule in nature," writes Annie Dillard, "is that live things are soft within and rigid without."³ Of the water signs, Pisces's fish are the exception, living as they do in such a supple medium. But Cancer's crab and Scorpio's scorpion know the wisdom of armoring. Life is so sharp against our soft insides. It pierces us. The Buddhists call this inner soft spot "bodhichitta," our good heart. It is our naked tenderness and vulnerability, the inner raw material that is perhaps what's best about us. This psychic ore of the underworld, when refined, can become the great love and selfless compassion of a bodhisattva or saint. Yet in its raw form, this tenderness more commonly inspires great defensiveness. Ironically, protecting our soft spot is how we usually develop our indifference, even hatred of the world. We have a choice with our Scorpio process. We can cauterize our wounds with awareness or simply burn the vulnerability into a hard surface.

I think of a few bad-ass Scorpio risings I've known. They sport looks that refuse to give themselves away, that just dare you to guess what they're feeling. But stay with them long enough, and a moment will come when the cover drops, and inside their usually indifferent eye, you'll see something soft and unprotected. A pool of sadness. A deep and silent record of some early vulnerability and torment. A horoscope's rising sign represents that first covering of personality, the psychological skin grown to suit one's early environment. Scorpio rising children were perhaps more naked than most, wearing their soft spot like a target. Such vulnerability may have made them the first among us to learn the arts of defensive covering. I think of this Scorpio

sensitivity every year during the annual bikers Christmas toy drive. It attracts hundreds of bikers, tattooed, bladed, pierced, bearded, greased, defiant, the kind of people you wouldn't want your family to meet on a deserted highway. Yet on this day every biker carries a plush bunny, bright frog or teddy bear-sweet offerings "for the children," as those interviewed on the local news tearfully explain, revealing the soft spot underneath their leather and chains.

Like a piece of god's own heart inside of us, this divine tenderness may be just too much voltage to control. When it's hurt, it's like a live wire dancing on the pavement, or a nine-headed Hydra hissing from its cave. How do we contain this power? Before we fully understand Scorpio's mysteries, we often dance fitfully, jealous, vengeful, raging, and in grief. But we must ground and empower ourselves, through right management of this more-than-human power. This is the deeper instruction of Hercules' final two acts-placing the immortal head in the ground and dipping arrows in the Hydra's poison. What do these actions mean? If you want Scorpio's respect, you must contemplate this mystery and discover the message for yourself.

Whenever I write an astrology article, the gods visit. First I must sit like a beggar outside the Zen master's gate, empty and uninspired. The sentences come slowly. After a mysterious interval that proves my sincerity - sometimes weeks, sometimes days - the teacher arrives. The archetype I write about begins appearing everywhere, on TV shows, in the blogs, at the grocery store. The sign or planet takes over my thoughts. It winds through my sentences, tells me where to go next, and lets me know when I'm done. I enjoy this surrender. But I was not prepared for the event that Scorpio arranged. When I was three hundred words into the article, my Scorpio rising father died.

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He was two weeks away from his 89th birthday. At three in the morning his sister heard him mutter "*Christ!*" It wasn't until daybreak that she discovered him on the floor of his bedroom unable to get up. He fell again that afternoon while opening a can of tuna. "*Shit!*" he moaned. Blood poured from his head.

Death is another Scorpio mystery that hides behind a hideous surface. It's universally sad. We consider it a defeat. But as my father lay barely conscious in the hospital, his upper body thin and wasting, his ♀ legs swollen three times their size, with a fatty tumor bigger than a cantaloupe in his belly, death seemed more friend than enemy. The final week my father was in the hospital, I began to think of him as Christopher Columbus heading off for a New World, the pioneer of our nuclear family, embarking on the greatest adventure of all. Indeed, when he finally passed, it was within hours of the Jupiter Uranus conjunction, that wonderful aspect of discovery and invention. It was trine his Scorpio Ascendant.

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I once heard the great astrologer and data collector Lois Rodden talk about death. I was surprised when she said that benefic Jupiter was often involved. Yet why not? From the soul's point of view, it's such a gift to move on. Grim Reaper Saturn also takes an interest, and the day my father died, Saturn was marching toward his Libra Sun. But when I put the transits of my father's death chart around his natal wheel, it was neither Saturn nor Jupiter who vied for my attention. To an astrologer's eye, the planets will ♀ often wink, vibrate, or grow larger to announce that they're involved. The blinking planets this time were Mercury and Mars. Transiting Mars in Scorpio was conjunct my dad's natal Mercury (ruler of his 8th house of death); transiting Mercury in Virgo was conjunct his natal Mars (ruler of his Ascendant and the body). These were the psychopomps who arrived at 1:10 pm to escort my father into the other world. He took two gasping breaths and was gone.

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I did not want to write this article after my father died. I'm sure my editors would have been kind to me. But I had already engaged Scorpio's archetype and its steely grit insisted I drive to the finish. And the very psychopomps that took my father on his journey were also at work in my chart (they're my Ascendant and 8th house rulers too). When Dad fell, Mars was conjunct my 3rd house Scorpio Saturn.⁴ Mercury was conjunct my Virgo Ascendant. Together they urged: *"Keep writing. Scorpio wants its story told."* I hope I've done it well.

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- 1 . See David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous* (Vintage Books: 1997).
- 2 . Robert Hand, *Horoscope Symbols* (Whitford Press: 1981), p. 228.
- 3 . Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* (Harper- Collins, 1974), p. 92.
- 4 . Saturn rules fathers and Mars brings head wounds and falls.

SAGITTARIUS



THE NOISY BIRDS OF SAGITTARIUS

"To keep his mind right, a man should look to the horizon at least once a day."

This was told to me by a weekend sailor, who heard it from an elder with some Navajo blood in him. I haven't seen either man's birth chart, but I suspect that Sagittarius is strong. At the least, the sailor and the elder recommend a superb daily practice for Sagittarians:

"Archers, send your eyes beyond the corral of your thoughts, into that intriguing distance, the space unknown, where you are unknown. Join your heart to this unseen territory, and against that faraway line, your present will come into perspective, a promising future will beckon."

Do this for the Sun in Sagittarius to nourish the fires of creativity and confidence. Do it for Mercury in Sagittarius to give thought its proper wing. Do it for Venus in Sagittarius to remember how truly vast and open is love. Do it ... I could go on, but astrology formulas make me restless – especially with horizon work, which is not about folding life into neat cupboards and drawers. Horizon-gazing is like the best astrology. It's designed to open life up, growing it wide with new possibilities.

Everyone needs such expansiveness. That's why the zodiac gives us each a Sagittarian house. If you haven't connected with yours lately, try the following experiment. Consider the area of life guided by Sagittarius in your chart. There, for the next thirty days, commit to a daily horizon practice. If Sagittarius guides your 5th house, horizon-gaze with children, write poetry, or paint what you see. If Sagittarius guides your 6th house, take your daily coffee breaks at a window with a distant view. If Sagittarius guides your 7th house, watch a month of sunsets with your partner. If Sagittarius ... you get the idea. Let your inner centaur lead; your spirit will follow.

But I warn you. Stare at the horizon too long, and a curious thing happens. The troubles of the world settle down like silt. They collect into an insignificant pebble, which you may inadvertently, quite carelessly, kick away. Your eyes lift and your mind soars – like a runaway birthday balloon! Up there: You see it all! You know it all! Your heart brims to overflowing. You feel so positive, so exuberant, so magnanimous, you want to share your

Truth with everyone! Cue Rod Serling music. You’ve just crossed over: into the distant reaches of the Sagittarius Zone

In the Sag Zone, you feel as fit and cheerful as an Alpine hiker. With a philosopher’s wit and the barefoot stride of a spiritual seeker, you’re eager to head out and read the Vast Book of the World! You might find God on a crowded Bangkok sidewalk or in a musty volume from a forgotten library shelf. Words like

“justice, freedom, integrity” make your heart pound. If you see wrongs, you want to right them. When it’s dark, you’re full of hope. If life gets inscrutable, answers fall to the tip of your tongue. In the Zone, you happily leap to your soapbox to preach to your friends – but strangely, they draw back in horror.

You’ve just hurt their feelings. Or you’ve forgotten an appointment. Your centaur hooves stumble on the annoying commitments they keep throwing in your path. People accuse you of being argumentative, self-indulgent, a procrastinator. It’s true. Some days, you don’t feel like doing anything adult. Lately, you’ve noticed how often your arrows miss their target, how quickly your fine plans just get boring. You push the thought away, but it keeps coming back: Maybe it’s not everyone else but you who’s the problem. Could it be ... with your bright ideas, that you’re simply a fool?

The short answer is

“*Yes!*” I can say this because I’ve got the Sun in Sagittarius, and I’ve had plenty of Sagittarius-rich friends. As we canter around on four legs, we can be quite obviously out of sync with the two-legged ones around us. We might be sunny, carefree, and chatty, except when we’re indignant, self-righteous, or academic and dry. We can be as irresponsible and crude as the centaurs of classical mythology, who were carousers, prone to intoxication and prophesying. We can be as aggravating as the forest creatures in Harry Potter’s world:

“*Never,*” says the gamekeeper Hagrid, irritably, “*try an’ get a straight answer out of a centaur. Ruddy stargazers.*

Not interested in anythin’ closer than the moon.”¹

When you have serious work to do, Sagittarians aren’t usually the first ones you’ll call. But call them you will eventually, whenever you hunger for more meaning, laughter, or adventure. Sagittarius’s position in the zodiac is instructive. Sandwiched between Scorpio and Capricorn, it separates the two most ambitious (some would say the grimmest) signs in the zodiac. Arising from Scorpio’s transformative ash heap, Sagittarius takes flight. On its wings, we enjoy new freedom, going beyond our limits, seeking wisdom and meaning through raw experience or higher education. We explore new philosophies, religions, foreign cultures. We challenge our bodies and minds. We follow our souls to liberate the Truth, going as far as our inner fire takes us – until we crash or land. Then, we must ground our high ideals with Capricorn’s reality and pragmatism.

If Scorpio is the Dark Prince and Capricorn is the Old King, Sagittarius is the Fool, the court jester who tricks the world into dropping its chin so he can flick its nose. The Fool lightens things up so that wisdom can enter the room. With his merry allusions, the Fool utters tough truths to the King without getting his head chopped off. His playfulness saves the world from destruction. His perspective brings the kingdom new life.

The World, Brought to You by Sagittarius

DANA GERHARDT

If you lack Sagittarius planets or even Sagittarian friends, you've nonetheless been expanded, bruised, inspired, or annoyed by this sign for decades. The transits of three outer planets through Sagittarius (from roughly 1970 to 2008) have woven Sag themes so deeply into the postmodern world that it's easy to argue that this sign sits at the center of contemporary culture, much as our Galactic Center is also in Sag.

Would we have traveled so enthusiastically to that Star Wars galaxy far, far away, brandishing light swords and mastering the Force with guru Yoda, if Neptune hadn't been in the sign of exploration, adventure, and spiritual seeking? When Neptune entered Sag in 1970, it broadcast a new spirit through the collective unconscious, steering fashion, films, politics, and dreams in Sagittarian directions for the next 14 years. Blame Neptune for the popularity of Jonathan Livingston Seagull. We were seduced into feeling just like that seagull: philosophical, free-wheeling, and desperate to

soar to new heights.

Even President Nixon caught the spirit, as he took us all the way to China, melting decades of diplomatic distance between the two nations. If you've ever lain on a Western acupuncturist's table, you can thank Neptune in Sagittarius for bringing you there.

Neptune gave us memorable Sagittarian avatars: the liberated Princess Leia, the whip-cracking adventurer Indiana Jones, even John Travolta as disco-dancing Tony Manero. His Sagittarian vitality and ethical code finally led him away from what he called a "fake" Brooklyn life into Manhattan's broader horizons. Travolta's iconic pose in white suit, pointing to the sky, is just another expression of the Archer. Fire-sign Sag glittered in disco's mirrored balls and shiny fabrics; it soared in

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elevated platform shoes and thrilled to disco's high-energy dancing. The fitness craze began then, too. Remember how Sagittarius Jane Fonda urged us to

"feel the burn"?

It was exotic and strange when the Beatles followed their guru to India; after Neptune entered Sagittarius, religious seeking became commonplace. Hippies regularly trekked to the East, airports blossomed with Hare Krishna dancers, Reverend Moon and Jim Jones hypnotized their cults. Godspell and Jesus Christ Superstar infused Christianity with a new Sagittarian exuberance. Much that was radical in the 1960s gained wider acceptance with Neptune in freedom-loving Sag. Women's lib went mainstream, distrust of the government grew, and drugs got more popular.

An interesting astrological study might be to correlate the rise and fall of certain drugs with Neptune through the signs. Marijuana and cocaine use increased during Neptune's Sag transit. Donna Cunningham and Andrew Ramer speculate that, on an energetic level, pot acts as a "root chakra rephaser," something that was likely appealing to a generation eager to uproot themselves from home, family, and uninspiring career possibilities.² (This may also have contributed to the '70s fascination with that homesick space traveler ET.) The pot-smoker's desire to

expand reality with a more visionary perspective is very Sagittarian. In the '80s, when electrifying Uranus joined Neptune in Sag, cocaine shimmied into the culture. This white powder from the high Andes mountains was particularly enjoyed by those reaching new heights in the skyscrapers of entertainment and finance. Cunningham and Ramer suggest that the metaphysical appeal of this drug was how it helped its users acclimate to the sudden altitudes of their new wealth.



Uranus was in Sagittarius from 1981 to 1988, sending a rebellious, iconoclastic surge through the decade. Disco gave way to punk – an intense and frenetic inversion of Sagittarian optimism. Rap, a preachy musical genre, was born as well. The rapper with his sparkly gold chains was another Sagittarian avatar. Uranus also rules technology and space. Bringing the imaginative worlds of Star Trek and Star Wars closer to reality, America's first reusable space craft, Columbia, was launched in 1981. That same year, IBM introduced Acorn, the first personal computer, and Microsoft introduced its new operating system, MS-DOS. Perhaps no single invention has pushed the limits of knowledge further than the PC. It's as though

the Higher Mind that Sagittarius craves had just descended to Earth in this little box.

Uranus brought shocks along with its innovations. There were religious scandals, including the first reports of sex abuse by Catholic clergy; popular preachers like Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggert toppled under the weight of their hypocritical lies. There were calamities, too. In 1986, the space shuttle Challenger, with the first teacher onboard, exploded after liftoff. In 1987, the stock market plunged. These are modern versions of the Icarus myth – about a boy so exhilarated with flying that he veers too close to the Sun, which melts his wax wings and sends him plunging to his death. This too is a lesson for Sagittarius, a sign prone to

fanaticism, exaggeration, and excess. The Tarot card associated with Sag is "Temperance," depicting an angel with two goblets, mixing water and wine. The suggestion is that in Sagittarius we must learn balance, to moderate our intoxications with clear thinking.

This is a lesson we got to learn again and again once Pluto entered Sagittarius from 1995 to 2008. The dot-com boom was followed by the dot-com bust, though Sagittarian optimism continued to fuel buying and spending. Credit card

offers flooded our mailboxes, and the astronomical rise in personal debt was matched by the rise in personal bankruptcies. The real estate bubble grew

bigger and bigger until it burst. Sag risky mortgage investments, along with years of deregulation, left the world's financial systems in ruins (a mess that Pluto in Capricorn still must clean up). Former Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan summed up the blind spot of our shiny Sagittarian years:

"[Financial crises] are all different, but they have one fundamental source ... the unquenchable capability of human beings when confronted with long periods of prosperity to presume that

it will continue."³ Sagittarius, with its arrows always pointing to the sky, must keep discovering that what goes up ... will eventually come down.

A small but potent planet⁴, Pluto took Sagittarius to even greater extremes and energized its shadow. Fanatics gained power. Religious intolerance became more concentrated and polarized. The elasticity of truth got stretched to the breaking point. After one president lied about a blow job, the next one lied us into a war.

Around the globe, Sagittarian self-righteousness squared off against an equal Sagittarian outrage – although the Tarot Temperance angel might have wanted us to see how, underneath our differences, we're of the same substance, a secular belief that also gained popularity. While scandals continued to weaken the Catholic Church, the lines between Christians, Muslims, and Jews grew sharper. Meanwhile, pop culture gobbled up spirituality like it was candy. By the time Pluto exited Sag, spiritual journeys had become a cultural obsession, through bestsellers like *Eat, Pray, Love*; *A New Earth*; and *The Secret*.





Would Oprah's book club have been so successful without Pluto in the sign of publishing? This industry was also transformed during Pluto's Sag years. Audio books became popular, allowing us to work out or

travel while reading! Through Project Gutenberg, we could now get whole books online. Mega-stores like Border's, Barnes & Noble, and Amazon changed the way books were sold. There were Sagittarius-style scandals, too, exposés of plagiarism and memoirs that were actually fiction. Yet, by the end of this transit, a not-so-quiet Sagittarian revolution had occurred. Would-be writers no longer needed publishers and editors. Anyone with an opinion could

shout it out from a blog in the middle of the world's cyber-square.

During the Pluto in Sag years, the Internet grew like a kudzu vine. Through the World Wide Web, computers had achieved their Sag functions of

collapsing borders and expanding our horizons. We could now bring libraries and universities into our bedrooms. We could travel the world without packing a single bag. Nixon's historic trip to China seems quaint now. I no longer have to trek to the East for spiritual inspiration; Tibetan Buddhist Masters regularly visit my town. Miles above me, the space station is manned by an international crew. I can wake up in the morning and find Moonprints orders from Norway, South Africa, or Hong Kong. At noon, I can make a Kiva loan to a Guatemalan weaver or a Kenyan cake-seller. At night, I can read a blog entry from my friend in Bhutan. The outer-planet transits through Sag have indeed given us the world. If they had hovered just a few more years in this sign, might we have gained

the whole universe?

Hercules' Sagittarian Challenge

Of course, our world may not have survived without the outer planets entering Capricorn to steady, restructure, and ground us with new realism. For those of us who have lived through the last four Sag decades, it may seem that we've labored enough in this sign. But let's go back a few thousand years to see what we can learn from Hercules' Sag labor. This is his sixth assignment; the king wants him to clear the

Stymphalian marsh of Arcadia.

The Arcadian marsh is infested with a horde of man-eating birds as fierce as lions and leopards. When Hercules arrives, he finds their noise unbearable. Their sharp beaks can pierce iron or bronze, so his armor is useless. They're parked around the marsh like penguins, yet his arrows just bounce off the metallic feathers protecting their torsos. Hercules is at a loss what to do. To gain some

peace and perspective, he climbs a nearby mountain. There he encounters Athena, who hands him a pair of divine castanets forged by the immortal craftsman Hephaestus. Hercules shakes the bronze castanets. Their joyful noise



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startles the Stymphalian birds, who quickly take flight. Some fly away forever. The rest Hercules picks off one by one, his arrows now reaching their soft bellies.

Hercules gives us a perfect formula for Sagittarian success. No matter what your challenge, Sagittarius, first go somewhere spacious, preferably to

a high place where you have room to breathe, where your mind can expand and thus open to the presence of

Higher Mind. When inspiration (like divine castanets) appears, allow yourself to become enthused. Let the new ideas fill you up as sound fills the air. Twirl around like Julie Andrews in a Sound of Music moment and become alive with inspiration! Then get focused. Pick up your bow. Train your eyes on your target.

Keep firing your arrows until your objective is achieved.

Birds are a universal symbol of thought. Yet, in the region of Arcadia, a mythical place renowned for its carefree joy and ease (like Sagittarius!), this gathering of birds is troubling and dark. The Stymphalian predators describe the shadow workings of the Sagittarian mind. Swamps are stagnant places where unconscious instincts can gather and fester. Sagittarius is designed to look to the future, to broaden its horizons, to seek those experiences that cultivate wisdom. But Sagittarius can also get mired in the past, lose its horizon, and injure itself without getting wiser. The Stymphalian birds are those unconscious beliefs that obstruct clear vision and judgment. They are the habitual thoughts that keep us from realizing our potential. Restlessness, inflation, self-righteousness, and selfishness are among the instincts that can weigh Sagittarians down.

The metal-feathered birds are beliefs and ideas that go nowhere. Brute force or determination won't get rid of them.

Sagittarius must itself get moving. Its consciousness must shift. A trip might do it. Discovering a new author could do it. So can meditation. Sagittarians have many options for clearing their internal swamp. But the moment negativity takes flight – that will always be a gift. It's not the result of self-effort. Sagittarians can only

open themselves and wait for a higher intelligence to appear, like divine music arriving from the spheres. The Sagittarian who truly understands this is forever humbled and therefore willing to practice at her real labor. The skill Sagittarius must develop is archery,

the capacity to focus and reach targets. A Sagittarian who merely plays and lets the divine rush in will never reach her full potential until she also gets to work.

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In Archetypes of the Zodiac, Kathleen Burt tells a wonderful story about Sagittarian focus⁵. An Archery Master, an old man whose time is valuable, is interviewing students. He’s unwilling to teach just anyone the art of the bow. Each prospective student must hold the bow and concentrate as the Master asks what he sees. The first sees a mountain across the valley, the sky, the trees, and a bird in one of the treetops.

“*Get out of here,*” says the Master. The next sees the same objects and also, out of the corner of his eye, the Master.

“*You fail, too,*” says the old man. More would-be students give similar responses until, finally, it’s the young prince’s turn.

“*What do you see?*” asks the Master.

“*I see only the bird.*” “*Look again and concentrate harder,*” the Master instructs. “*Ah! I see only the spot in the center of the bird’s forehead.*” “*Fine,*” says the Master.

“*Release the arrow. You will be my student.*”

That’s how to be a successful archer!

Notes

- 1 . J. K. Rowling, **Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone**, Scholastic Press, 1998, p. 254.
- 2 . Donna Cunningham and Andrew Ramer, **Further Dimensions of Healing Addictions**, Cassandra Press, 1988.
- 3 . <http://wallstreetblips.dailyradar.com/story/bbc-news-business-market-crisis-will-happen-again/>
- 4 . Despite Pluto’s demotion by astronomers, I continue to consider it a planet, given the undeniable strength of its influence by transit.
- 5 . Kathleen Burt, **Archetypes of the Zodiac**, Llewellyn Publications, 1988, p. 321.





CAPRICORN

MASTERING THE HOUND OF HELL

*"I feel good about the apocalypse. Because I think people will have to relearn their habits, and I think it's going to be better."*¹

Sandra Tsing Loh, NPR commentator

I have many intuitive clients. Over the years a small tribe of them, each unknown to the other, has confessed to me a special mission, something they didn't dare tell family or friends. Like the characters in the television series *Heroes*, they're ordinary people with extraordinary powers. I don't mean they fly, time travel, or fall from ten-story buildings without breaking bones. Instead they have vision. They peered across their happy consumer landscapes and saw the dark clouds of unimaginably dire times rolling in – long before this news was featured in *Time* magazine. As children they knew civilization was crumbling. Steadily they began acquiring facts and back-to-nature skills that would make them the necessary heroes of their future dazed communities. None had a date when the end-times would begin. But now that Pluto has entered Capricorn, I suspect it's coming soon.*

Talk of the apocalypse usually brings me a flutter of fear, but I mostly feel good about the coming years. The zodiac is a knowing wheel, balancing each sign's excesses with the sign that comes next. Following the giddy highs of expansive Pluto-in-Sagittarius, we need the caution and contraction of Capricorn. The sign is ruled by scythe-wielding Saturn who is now marching through the collective with his banners of "*less is more*" and "*the end is near*." Last year I got lasik eye surgery in part because of that horrific *Twilight Zone* episode in which Earth's last man sat down to finally read his treasured books in peace, then his glasses fell and shattered. But I'm ready now. I've got lasiked eyes and a garage full of unread books. If things get really bad, I can burn them for fuel or eat them as carbohydrates.

When the apocalypse comes, I'll simply hold up my piece of the collective tent and do as I've always done: I'll read the signs. Already the world is full of new Capricorn Sabian symbols: A jobless husband and wife lose their recently purchased home. Another undiscovered insect disappears in the Amazon. A gas guzzling car shoved off a cliff. People with graduate degrees eating at soup kitchens. But it's not all grim. When Pluto transits a sign, he just shakes it up, both razing and renewing what it rules. In Capricorn that means the establishment-leadership, structure, government, corporations. Some businesses will fail, but others will thrive-like the firms making reusable shopping bags and the folks at "Despair.com." They market demotivation paraphernalia to chronic cynics and corporate ne'er-do-wells. According to a recent Nightline story, "It's boom times for despair." That's a Capricorn word and the website is having its best year ever, selling posters with inspirational photographs and captions like "*Worth: Just because you're necessary doesn't mean you're important*" or "*Mistakes: It could be your life purpose is just to serve as a warning to others.*"

Capricorn's goat is quite a comedian.² Sure he's an ambitious mountain climber. He's a realist who'll eat tin cans when he needs to. But he's also got a merry glint in his eye. Capricornus (Latin for "horned goat") is the mythological cousin of Pan and his carousing band of satyrs (half-men, half-goats). Satyrs are wicked, lewd, subversive, and funny. A satyr is the featured star of Capricorn's Tarot card, the Devil, which pictures, in the Rider-Waite-Smith deck, a nude woman and man chained to the pedestal of a menacing goat-demon. It seems like an awful situation and nobody likes drawing this card. But if you take a closer look, you'll discover the chains around the prisoners' necks are so loose, the man and woman could just slip them off and walk away. That's the joke. The card implies that the Devil, to paraphrase Pogo, is always us. We are the prisoners of our own desires, fears, and greed.

Under the fertilizing optimism and preachiness of Pluto in Sagittarius, fear and greed have had a field day - from the fear-mongering politicians, to the Enron-styled speculators, real estate boomers, war profiteers, and CEOs who slash jobs and award themselves ridiculously high bonuses. Greed even blossomed in metaphysical quarters with the mass excitement inspired by The Secret and its promise of manifesting bicycles or diamond rings just by thinking them into your hands. My favorite example of Sagittarian excess is the Nero-fiddling-as-Rome-burns MTV series My Super Sweet 16, in which whiny privileged kids are given the budgets of small nations to throw themselves over-the-top birthday parties. In each episode a self-involved

brat designs an elaborate invitation ceremony (primarily to humiliate the uninvited), then hires the biggest celebrity daddy can afford, stages a party entrance befitting a tribal queen or king (carried on a litter, surrounded by near-naked dancers, or deposited by helicopter), and always gets the keys to a new luxury car at the end.

"My dad owns his own oil company and he has oil wells all over the world," one MTV sweet sixteen proudly proclaimed. "*I love oil. Oil means shoes and cars and purses.*" Her birthday vehicle was a BMW 325i which, she enthused, "*kind of sets me apart from everyone else in this town.*"³

But Pluto in Capricorn has peeled back the façade on this reality tale. The oil princess' daddy is now under indictment for swindling hundreds of investors with an oil business that didn't actually exist. If the Devil card suggests that people author their own demise, it looks like Pluto in Capricorn has a similar sense of humor. The programmers at MTV must have been checking their ephemerides too, because their latest show is Exiled, in which the same spoiled brats are given a darker dose of reality. Their rich dotting parents send them to live with underprivileged people in foreign lands, sharing rooms with chickens and cow dung, where they have to - gasp - do actual chores.

Capricorn's humor is ironic and dry, which is just the sort of thing to get us through hard times. I suspect as the end nears, things will get funnier and funnier. With the zeal of a French peasant watching privileged heads roll, I hope all the greedy bastards get what they deserve. As for you and me, we've got our own work to do.



Learning from Hercules' Labors

In high school I won a few oratory prizes for a speech that began with a festooning hand gesture and the horrified pronouncement that "*Conformity is sweeping the nation.*" Next to the apocalypse, this was my second greatest fear of Pluto entering Capricorn: that it would dial us back to a fifties-style conformity of grey flannel suits and briefcases. Capricorn is a businessman after all, and Capricorn mottos are what our parents and teachers - and society in general - have been preaching since we were toddlers.

Obey the rules. Be responsible. To gain respect you've got to earn it. Work hard and you'll go far. Capricorn is conventional, dependable, practical, and disciplined. It's ambitious too, but prefers climbing the stairs of existing structures. Its success generally follows traditional routes. Being a sixties – hippy at heart, I worried about Cap Pluto's approaching heyday, never imagining how shiny its virtues would appear in a post-millennium world. I'm now delighted that Capricorn keywords like "respect," "integrity," and "effective leadership" are making a comeback. I'll even become a conservative, if that means being progressive enough to conserve resources rather than using them up. Rebuilding infrastructure and revitalizing government and corporations seem like worthwhile projects, well-suited to Pluto's transformation and renewal of Capricorn themes.

In addition to Pluto's collective projects, he'll surely assign us each personal ones. And if you want to be successful, I suggest sailing along with the collective mood. Use Capricorn as your pole star and become the determined new leader of your life. If the mascot for Pluto-in-Sagittarius was the youthful adventurer ("How can I get ahead quick without working too hard?"), Capricorn gives us the wise old man counseling, "Be more practical, realistic, and patient, going step by step toward your dreams." This is not as bad as it seems. And with Capricorn's penchant for histories and hierarchies, we can inspire ourselves with plenty of good role models. I decided to go back through the centuries and grab a mythological hero – using Hercules and his twelve labors as the touchstone for this new series on zodiac signs.

I've wanted to do this for years, after reading so many intriguing references, like this one from Ernest Busenbark: *"As early as the fifth century BC, Pausanias observes that the Twelve Labors of Hercules represented the annual passage of the sun through the twelve signs of the zodiac. His opinion was supported by the Scholiast of Hesiod which says that 'the zodiac in which the sun accomplishes its annual course is the real career of Hercules.'"*⁴ Occult teacher Alice Bailey has also linked the signs and the labors as a metaphysical description of the soul's journey toward spiritual mastery.⁵

If we must "do" Capricorn for the next fifteen years, then perhaps Hercules can inspire us. The labor traditionally linked to Capricorn is his final one, in which Hercules goes to hell and back.⁶

The twelfth labor is Hercules' Capricorn challenge. Some believe it's his most difficult one: traveling to the gates of Hell and bringing back its vicious three-headed guard dog, Cerberus, who allows anyone into Hell, but never lets anyone out. Before the mission, Hercules goes to Eleusis where he is purified by initiation into its mysteries. Then through the mouth of a cave in Laconia, he descends to the Underworld, with Hermes as his guide.

Surprised spirits run away, except for the terrible Medusa; hissing snakes writhe around her head. Hercules draws his sword, but Hermes says, *"Don't waste your time, they're only spirits."* The two meet Charon, who initially refuses passage on his barge until the hero attacks him with his own oars; thus cowed, Charon ferries them across the River Styx, where Hercules sees a sight that brings tears to his eyes. His dear friend Theseus is bound in the chains of forgetfulness. He had gone to Hell with Peirithous to rescue Persephone. Cerberus tore Peirithous to pieces and would have done the same to Theseus had not Pluto intervened.

Hercules requests an audience with the formidable Underworld god. He asks for Pluto's permission to take both Theseus and the hell hound back to the land of the living. Pluto consents, but with one condition: Hercules must use only his bare hands – no clubs or arrows – to subdue the beast. The hero then seizes the three-headed dog by the neck and squeezes the base of its three throats. The dog nearly suffocates. The warrior then rips the chains from Hell's gates and makes a leash with three collars for each of the dog's trembling heads. With Theseus at his side, Hercules drags the hound along, onto Charon's barge, then upwards, where the sun's rays become so blindingly intense, Cerberus rears up and runs away, dragging Hercules halfway back to hell. Angry now, the hero yanks the hound back and steps on its throat until the choking dog submits. A foaming spit falls from its mouths and from each drop sprouts Aconite, a plant of deadly poison. As usual (and as you'll see if you follow along with me throughout the rest of this series), the King who assigned this labor is surprised that Hercules succeeds. Hiding behind his chair, King Eurystheus orders Hercules to return Cerberus to the Underworld, after which the hero's labors are complete.

In the story there are no goats, no business suits; in fact, there's little that immediately suggests Capricorn. Even so, subduing Hell's watchdog is a perfect metaphor for the central challenge of our Capricorn houses and planets. But first, what can we learn from the surrounding details? Hercules' approach is well planned. He purifies himself by initiation into the Underworld mysteries. Without that protection, his trip to Hell might easily have been his last. Capricorn ambitions likewise demand a strong foundation – an initiation into the tradition of whatever goal you're pursuing. Even if you plan to break the rules – it's important to first learn them. Hercules also takes a guide. In Aries, it's better to be spontaneous and blaze trails; in Cancer, you need to follow intuition and feelings; in Libra, take a partner; but in Capricorn, mentorship is key. Your odds for success increase with strong role models. Follow those who have been where you want to go.

A successful publisher I know has Capricorn in his 9th house of publishing. His literary press was actually a gift from his publishing mentor—who not only proposed the idea, but arranged its initial funding.

Hermes tells Hercules not to waste his time fighting spirits. I remember long ago, when my first husband entered the corporate world, one of his mentors advised him not to waste any time in the lunchroom talking to people he labeled as “losers” and “complainers”. Fresh from college, my husband and I thought this was insensitive and extreme. But over the years, I’ve rethought the wisdom of his advice. Keeping focus in Capricorn may mean walking away from others. Those who don’t share your goals are only phantoms in the realm where you want to succeed. Hermes does, however, allow Hercules to attack Charon. Mars, the planet of aggression, is exalted in Capricorn. The message here is strategic: Don’t fight every battle – just the ones that matter. Charon is an obstacle that must be overcome. To paraphrase a line from Randy Pausch’s Last Lecture, *“Obstacles arise to keep others out and let you prove just how badly you want your dream.”* Our Capricorn successes usually mean a lot to us – because at some point we will likely have had to fight for them.

Of course, taken to extremes, this attitude can lead to negative Capricorn behaviors: becoming ruthless, egotistical, domineering, status-seeking, and exploitative. That’s the implicit message in Hercules’ balancing action of rescuing Theseus. Ambition is tempered by an act of service. Capricorn is the first of the three transpersonal signs—which suggests in its house and with its planets, we must keep our eyes on the greater good, what benefits others and not ourselves alone.

Hercules approaches the leader of the Underworld and requests permission to liberate Theseus and take the dog. Capricorn missions require that we respect the chain of command. Even so, it’s surprising that Pluto so quickly acquiesces – particularly to those of us who have seen how badly Pluto can ravage an individual’s life by transit. We are reminded here of a natural affinity between Capricorn and Pluto’s sign Scorpio: they are in sextile, an aspect of collaboration. The two signs share a similar value: an appreciation for power and recognition of its forms. Recall too that Hercules was well prepared for this moment. Having undergone initiation into the Underworld mysteries, he’s essentially on Pluto’s team.

Recently two clients of mine received a simultaneous Pluto transit to all four angles of their chart. Given the potential of this transit to overturn every area of life – home, career, relationship, even physical health—it was a transit we’d had our eye on for years. One got the transit in late degrees of Sag, the other in early Capricorn. Both suffered serious setbacks in their

career. But the one who met Pluto in late Sag triumphed. He landed a new and better position. The one whose angles were in early Capricorn didn’t fare so well: He got fired, suffered a health crisis, his wife divorced him, and his driver’s license was revoked after a DUI. It might be tempting to conclude that Pluto is kinder in Sagittarius than Capricorn. Even more tempting is that awful sort of astrological moralizing that assumes if a transit goes badly it was the individual’s fault. Perhaps it’s better to study the process each transit evoked. That brings us to the significance of Cerberus.



Battling the Three-Headed Dog

What kicked the supports out of each man’s career was not his own doing. Both are salesmen. An economic downturn in their respective businesses jeopardized their careers, sending each into a crisis of depression and insecurity. Their negative inner voices started barking and howling – much like Cerberus, who symbolizes the beast in everyone’s underworld, standing at the doorway of loss, failure or death. Alice Bailey suggests that Cerberus’ three heads are symbols of sensation, desire, and good intentions – or, needing to feel good; wanting to get ahead and be satisfied; and entertaining ideas that are never performed (as in “the road to hell is paved with good intentions”). Bailey’s list is a fine start, but I rather think our Capricorn dogs are more versatile, taking their yips, growls and bites from our personal history and a confluence of the weaknesses in our chart.

The salesman with Pluto’s transit in late degrees of Sagittarius neared his Cerberus, but didn’t have to battle hard. Instead he hugged his Sagittarian optimism and looked at the opportunities around him, an attitude that rewarded him with a more powerful status (and yes, Pluto transits do mean to empower us in the end). The salesman with Pluto’s transit in early Capricorn had a more difficult time. Listening to his struggle, I identified the three heads of his Cerberus as fear, high expectations (and its withering perfectionism), and finally, inertia. With many planets in water, and Neptune rising, he was overwhelmed. He simply gave up his Herculean fight. Inertia is more common for the Capricorn archetype than our cookbooks often say. I’ve known many Capricorns who, buckling under the weight of

this sign’s expectations, just lie down instead of climbing their mountains. Without a goal, Capricorns are vulnerable to depression.

Bailey’s channeled guide, the Tibetan known as DK, said that Capricorn is one of the most difficult signs to write about because it’s the most mysterious. I’ve come to believe in spiritual circles, when something is considered “mysterious” or “secret,” it’s because there is no collective canon. For everyone it’s different and so our Capricorn struggles – though observed and evaluated by society – are ultimately quite personal. Throughout our Capricorn journey, we’re required to exert self-control. Too much leads to grim rigidity. But without it, we could never prepare and plan our ascent, submit to tradition, listen to mentors, and discern when to sheathe or wield our sword. The work is never-ending. For even if we do subdue our Cereberus, its bitter spit can sprout a poisonous attitude – like the Aconite in the story – that brings trouble later.


Ultimately we’re both the victor and the vanquished – much like the man and woman pictured in the Devil card. Self-mastery is Capricorn’s central assignment. This is why Hercules is allowed no weapons, but must grapple naked with the beast. Only by conquering ourselves can we claim the genuine authority that Capricorn promises. Hercules returns to the land of the living, just as the Sun does every year in Capricorn, arriving at winter solstice, when the days reverse their gathering darkness. Individually and collectively, may we also return from darkness in the coming Pluto-in-Capricorn years.



Notes

- 1 . http://www.salon.com/mwt/feature/2008/08/19/sandra_tsing_loh/index2.html
- 2 . Capricorn humorists include Steve Allen, Andy Kaufman, Howard Stern, Jim Carrey, Tracey Ullman; David Letterman, Richard Pryor, Lucille Ball have Capricorn Moons. Favorite comedian of the Depression, Charlie Chaplin, had Saturn on his Midheaven.
- 3 . <http://abcnews.go.com/Business/PainAtThePump/story?id=5029836>
- 4 . Busenbark, **Symbols, Sex and the Stars**, (1997, p. 60). I was unable to verify Busenbark’s claims. The origins of the labors are actually murky, as only fragments are available prior to Apollodorus’ first full written collection. Some believe there were originally nine or ten tales before they were canonized as twelve, but by Apollodorus’ time, references to zodiac constellations do appear in the stories.
- 5 . Alice Bailey, **The Labours of Hercules: An Astrological Interpretation**, (Lucis Trust, 1974).
- 6 . The traditional order of Hercules’ labors does not coincide with the order of signs in the zodiac.

* Editor’s note: in Jan. 2008



AQUARIUS

THE POWER OF THE OUTSIDERS

You could tell that Augeas was the son of the Sun. His arresting eyes sparkled with his dad's divine audacity. As a curly-headed prince, Augeas had big plans. Starting with a modest herd of cows he planned a future rich beyond any mortal's imagining. By his middle years, now a King, he'd amassed so many cattle, horses, goats and sheep that no one could count them all.

When King Augeas looked in the mirror, he saw a great man looking back. Even so, there were a few details he'd overlooked. For one, he neglected to have the dung cleared from the royal stables. After decades the stench of manure had grown so thick, it drenched the entire peninsula. The kingdom became so fully dunged that crops refused to grow. Hunger and pestilence swept the land. In the winter of his years, the King watched helplessly as his legacy withered away.

If the zodiac stopped at Capricorn and never reached Aquarius, this is how civilization would crumble. Capricorn kings dream big. They achieve important goals and create impressive structures. They make the rules, direct the flow of commerce, and preserve the status quo. But even master builders have their blind spots. Oblivious to the unintended consequences of their life's work, they may fail to see the waste and consumption of resources, the dark inertia of their ambition or greed. Capricorn kings inevitably get stuck in their own ideas and can't relinquish their own authority. Creativity is stymied. Problems pile up. Fortunately, the limitations of every sign always take us to the next one's gifts; so Capricorn leads us to the genius in Aquarius. Altruistic, progressive and unconventional, Aquarius brings the leap in consciousness that keeps our world from getting hopelessly mired in old dung.

For each of his twelve labors, Hercules adopts the method and virtues of the necessary zodiac sign. For his Aquarius labor, he presents himself to King Augeas as an outsider, a bold and unusual stranger eager to save the kingdom. *"I'll clean up your stables in just one day,"* he promises. *"For what price?"* the King asks warily. *"No fee. It stinks around here,"* our hero says, *"and I'm the kind of guy*

who likes to make the world a better place." The King is suspicious. "Nobody works for free. Still I welcome anyone who can do the job. Here's the deal: If you succeed, I'll give you one-tenth of all my wealth. If you fail, your life and fortune are mine."

Hercules tours the stables that afternoon. Their immensity and filth are worse than he imagined. A cart piled high with corpses clatters by; the mix of noxious odors makes his head spin. He climbs to a nearby waterfall and drops his face into the fresh water for relief. "It would take a year and a thousand men to remove that shit!" Hercules studies the sky, the stables below, the two great rivers bordering the valley—and suddenly—he smiles. "Aha!" He will drive those rivers straight into the stables. The next morning he works hard to wrest the rivers from their centuries-old course, rolling boulders, digging trenches, cutting holes in stable walls. By afternoon, fresh water is thundering through the fetid murk. Within a single day, the stinking crap is cleared.

"You cheated!" the King complains that night. "The rivers deserve the prize." It's true. Hercules had labored, but the rivers had done the work. This is instructive. Aquarian genius is opportunistic that way. It steals from the field of possibilities, rearranges the old laws, and shifts the current paradigm. In an intuitive flash it sees a new way to solve an old problem. The Aquarian attitude is one of daring—a thumb-of-the-nose to prevailing powers and structures. Its gifts are heavenly—for it seems to grant greater-than-human abilities to those like Hercules who complete the Aquarius mission properly.

The sign of the Water Bearer has a long association with gifts from higher powers. Ancient Egyptians noted that the Nile always flooded during the weeks that Aquarius rose at sunset. They believed Osiris was making love to Isis then; it was the god's way of fertilizing the life below. The Greeks told

a different story, yet also identified this sign with life-renewing potency. Their Water Bearer was a handsome youth named Ganymede; Zeus enlisted him to keep the gods' ambrosia flowing. Today we're more inclined to see air waves or electricity in Aquarius' glyph of wavy lines. The sign's life-renewing waters have yielded to its air sign status. Aquarius is now the lightning bolt of inspiration that allows mankind—temporarily at least—to see and think like gods.

Since Uranus was discovered and designated the modern ruler of Aquarius (Saturn is its traditional ruler), this sign has become progressively identified with invention, innovation, and technology. How impoverished our world would be without its Aquarian innovators! Pluck Thomas Edison from our collective past and thousands of modern conveniences would disappear. Eliminate Franklin Roosevelt from the US presidency and significant social programs would be lost. Likely it was an Aquarian Sun or Moon who first suggested, "Maybe that tomato isn't poisonous" or "Leather around the foot might make walking easier." In how many places and times did Aquarians radically change their communities, befriending the town outcast, speaking out against inequity, or simply challenging the usual way a thing was done?

Aquarius is the sign of humanitarian forward-thinking, which makes the mythology of its two rulers puzzling. Both Saturn and Uranus (or Kronos and Ouranos) were stodgy sky gods who ate their children to preserve the status quo and obstruct all chance of change. This is hardly Aquarian! Richard Tarnas argues convincingly that Uranus at least was incorrectly named. The planet should have been called "Prometheus," after the wily Titan who crafted mankind from clay, then stole the gods' own fire for us, bringing

life, culture, and science to humankind.¹ Prometheus does seem a better deity to appeal to for Aquarian inspiration—for the independent thought, the rebellious act, and most of all, the passion to keep evolving our world into a better place.

To bring a Promethean spirit to your Aquarius house and planets, follow Hercules' formula at the Augean stables. Enter the scene as an outsider. Survey the territory and climb above its problems; be willing to see things fresh. Once inspired, go with the confidence of water thundering through the stables, clearing the old by doing what never before was done. Aquarius offers an especially good style for tackling the kind of overwhelming problems that face us today. Indeed, when the cities were flooded with horse dung at the previous turn of the century, only new thinking and new technology saved the day, as automobiles replaced horses on city streets. Today's streets and institutions are overwhelmed with a more insidious kind of dung. There's widespread poverty, ecological ignorance, and the sewage of corporate greed. Our planet is poised on the brink of so many disasters, the only happy news is that we're entering an Aquarian Age. May it bring the great Promethean leap our troubled world needs!

Hot, cold, and Aquarian

As a beginning astrologer, when I made my first tentative offers to read charts for friends, Aquarians were the first to step forward. Aquarius Risings, Aquarius Suns, Aquarius Moons—they were all intrigued by astrology. They didn't need my profuse and nervous disclaimers that I couldn't predict their futures. Whatever it was I could tell them, they found fascinating. Those early sessions were so affirming. I'd say *"You're a unique individual—not like the rest of your family."* They'd nod their heads. I'd say *"People, especially friends, are important to you,"* and they'd say *"Yes, that's true."* When I said, *"You're creative and a bit rebellious,"* not one disagreed! Their sheer friendliness allowed me to think I was becoming a good astrologer.

Aquarius is one of the most likeable signs of the zodiac. If you walk into a roomful of strangers, feeling awkward and shy, an Aquarian will likely break ranks and welcome you, as happy to see someone new as greet an old friend. This sign has a genuinely curious and unpretentious manner. No wonder its natives seem to know everyone in the room. And when their eyes turn on you, you can suddenly feel so interesting. Think of Oprah Winfrey—the Aquarian talk show host—whose effervescent rapport with guests and audience allows millions of viewers to feel like she's a dear friend.

Yet as welcoming as Aquarius can be, at some point you'll find its warmth is unstable. Without warning, its goodwill can vanish. You walk up to your Aquarian friend and there's no returning smile as her eyes look right through you. This sharp contrast to her previous behavior makes it hurt even more.

Did you do or say something wrong? Grimly, you recall what's sometimes said about Aquarians: "*They love humanity; it's just people they can't stand.*" Among the many paradoxes of this friendly sign is how unfriendly it can seem.

Aquarians can be both colorful and cold, as one of my friends used to grumble about her Aquarian boss: "*He's always making impossible demands without any idea that he's putting us through hell. He's brilliant but he's living on a different planet from the rest of us.*" Once in the lunchroom, her boss and co-workers were having fun with a magazine personality test. When the Aquarian was asked to name his best feature, he quite sincerely replied, "*It's my sensitivity.*" The lunchroom girls did spit takes. My friend's boss was often out of touch with his crew, but his company was enormously successful because of the wide social network he'd cultivated around the country. In every city he visited, there was a client, colleague or friend who was delighted to meet him for dinner.

A Scorpio client once complained, "*I have the hardest time with Aquarians. Like my daughter-in-law... she's so detached, always doing for everybody else. My grandson got hurt on a gate at daycare. I was furious. I wanted to drive down and yank him out if they didn't fix it immediately. But instead my daughter-in-law gets a toolbox and the whole family heads to the school to fix the gate themselves. That way, she tells my grandson, 'no one else will get hurt.' Can you imagine?*"

She shook her head. Water sign Scorpio is so intensely emotional, that the cool efficiency of Aquarius can be derailing.

Yoko Ono is another example of a misunderstood Aquarian. Picture her at twelve years old, crouched with her mother and two younger siblings in a Tokyo bomb shelter, as thousands of American B29's rained down destruction in the largest WWII air strike against a Japanese city. Eighty-three thousand people died. Yoko fled the burning rubble on foot with her family; for

weeks they foraged for food in the country. Yoko is an eccentric artist (some would say awful and others brilliant), yet she's dedicated her life to promoting peace around the world. Still, she's most known for being the Dragon Lady who broke up the Beatles, an accusation that insiders say is unfair. Even Paul McCartney has remarked, "*I thought she was a cold woman. I think that's wrong. She's just the opposite. I think she's just more determined than most people to be herself.*"⁷²

"*You're insensitive and indifferent*" isn't something we'll say to Aquarians during their readings, but it's how we may describe them to everyone else. Over the years I've trained myself not to take their coolness personally. When my Aquarian friends have seemed distant or aloof, I've checked in and found they're generally clueless about how they're coming across. As socially savvy as this sign can be, it can also be socially obtuse. Perhaps "innocence" is a better word than "indifference." They're often innocent to their friends' needs for intimacy; innocent to the hurt they may be causing; innocent even to those oddball moments when they slip out of synch with social norms. They may be keenly in tune with the larger community, seeing opportunities and shifts that others might miss, but they're often blind to the subtleties of inter-personal needs.

It's easy to see the evolutionary advantage of this detachment. To remain so available to new possibilities, Aquarians must be able to shut doors with the same ease they open them. It helps that their feet aren't mired in the sticky glue of other people's expectations. And it's easier to be unconventional when you're unaware that this is so. Branden, my Aquarian son, was the only second grader to dye his hair green—not because he wanted to be "different," but because he thought everybody would think this was cool.

But detachment does not provide protection. Aquarians do bleed from their social wounds. I first learned this from my good friend Molly. With her Aquarius Moon, she's a citizen of the world. Wherever we go, restaurant, concert, meeting, or hike in the woods, we run into someone she knows. True to the eccentric and egalitarian nature of Aquarius, her eclectic interests connect her with a wide variety of people. Molly knows bikers, classical musicians, drug addicts, and recovering alcoholics; also, equestrians, born-again Christians, native American traditionalists, holistic health practitioners, dog breeders and more. Yet social rejection has been her recurring theme.

Being the youngest and only girl in a family of boys, Molly was often left out or left behind; at school, she was dressed in a way that set her apart from everyone else. It's hard for me to believe this popular, outgoing woman when she claims she was a pariah for most of her life—but I do believe, given her heightened Aquarian sensitivity to belonging, she's felt that way many times. One of her earliest and most painful memories is of standing in her playpen, crying non-stop, while the rest of the family played at a game on the floor and thoroughly ignored her. As children, many of us experienced "tribal" rejections; what we make of these early experiences defines (or is defined by) our natures. Some decide the world is hostile and untrustworthy; others, *"I'm not important."* Yet the imprint on Aquarius almost seems to deepen its bond with the tribe—as though the pain of rejection hollows out a space, which fills with an ever-lasting attachment and love for the group.

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Reading for Aquarians over the years, I've learned to ask this standard Aquarius question: *"Have there been times when you felt like an outcast?"* The answer is always yes. The experience is usually more painful because they didn't see it coming. It's not surprising that the term "inferiority complex" was invented by an Aquarian. The Austrian psychologist Alfred Adler knew what it was like to be excluded and misjudged. A teacher wanted to keep him out of school because he wasn't smart enough, recommending he apprentice to a shoe cobbler instead. That hurt. But it was also motivating. Adler applied himself and eventually rose to the top of his class. Later he became the father of self-help therapy. A typically independent Aquarian, he broke away from the dominant Freudian school, and asserted that people could benefit from psychological insights without relying on a therapist. He was the first to say what is now widely accepted, that social pressures—how others view us—can deeply wound us with feelings of helplessness and inadequacy.

My friendly Aquarian son has a heightened sense of what it takes to be long. At times he's widely popular, other times he holds himself apart. He's also sensitive and kind to the ones that others ostracize. In grammar and middle school he'd sometimes come home with a heart full of sorrow, remembering the kids who didn't play with him that day. Nothing I ever said really soothed him. But one day he discovered his own remedy, a line he picked up from a cheery oddball on TV: *"If somebody doesn't like me, I don't mind, 'cause I know there's always somebody else out there who will."* Indeed, now in high school, when he goes for stretches without calling local friends, he's online, texting or playing video games with people he's met around the world.

THE SIGNS AND HERCULES' TWELVE LABORS

Being ostracized is an Aquarian experience that’s ultimately a human one. We’ve all been on the outside at times. Perhaps we can learn from Aquarius and respond in an upbeat way that strengthens, rather than harden our hearts. The capacity to be hurt and remain open, to have sympathy for outsiders, is no doubt why Aquarius, even more than compassionate Pisces or service-oriented Virgo, is identified with tolerant, altruistic, and humanitarian aims.

The Tao of the Different

The world needs so much healing today, it’s no surprise there are so many people moved to call themselves “shamans.” But originally this term had to be earned. You were a shaman because the community desired your healing power. Aquarius must also listen for what the collective needs from it. That’s one description of altruism—though on this point, one of my Aquarian clients rebelled. “*The way astrology books are written, it’s like I’m supposed to give up my life to save the whales or feed starving children in Africa. But I don’t want to do those things.*” Saving whales or feeding the hungry are conventional pictures of humanitarianism. And while Aquarians are often activists and great supporters of causes, they are anything but conventional. Their first responsibility is to listen to their dreams and follow their own peculiar trail of passions.

When Robert Darwin looked at his Aquarian son Charles, he saw a boy who was lazy in school and a troublemaker at home. He was sure this slow learner would become the family disgrace. Young Charles loved to play and hike in the wild. He was fascinated with flowers and birds. But as a young man, he found medical school so tedious, he skipped most of his classes. Darwin preferred spending long hours with the school’s taxidermist, whose tales of South American rain forests seeped brightly into his dreams. Darwin dropped out of medical school. He took up the ministry, but soon got bored with that too. Then he was consumed with a new hobby, collecting beetles. Who would have predicted this trail of hot and cold interests would eventually lead to the Galapagos Islands and Darwin’s theory of evolution? Only when looking back on a life does its trail of genius become clear.

This is especially true of Aquarians. Their moods and development can be so different from their peers. My partner's Aquarian son is now delighting audiences in high school musicals, but at twelve he was a loner and nearly jailed for threatening to bomb the school. One friend's Aquarian son was a devil-worshipping high school dropout before he became a Buddhist therapist. There are no rules for Aquarians, except one: Stay out of the box. Aquarians need the space to follow their different rhythms. They may, like Yoko Ono, be so avant-garde and controversial that few understand them. Or like Charles Darwin, their work could provoke arguments a hundred years after their death. Perhaps, like James Joyce, their work will be banned in their own country. But the world will eventually catch up. In the most seductive sentence in the history of the novel—Molly Bloom's soliloquy yielding to her lover—Joyce suggests how we might all surrender to peculiar paths of Aquarian genius in our charts:

“yes I said yes I will Yes.”

Notes

1. Richard Tarnas, *Prometheus the Awakener* (Spring Publications, 1995)
2. Biography for Paul McCartney

PISCES



OF FROGS AND COWS

*"To a frog that's never left his pond the ocean seems like a gamble. Look what he's giving up: security, mastery of his world, recognition! The ocean frog just shakes his head. 'I can't really explain what it's like where I live, but someday I'll take you there.'"*¹

Explaining the Pisces world, I feel like a pond frog asked to describe the ocean: How can I say what it's truly like? I'm no expert. I've got Virgo rising, which means I've typically encountered Pisces through my 7th house partners. Clinging to Virgo virtues, I've spent years demonstrating my inability to understand my Pisces mates—poets, musicians, alcoholics, liars and dreamers. How many times I've peered into their nebulous world and thrown up my hands: *"What d'ya mean you just 'forgot' to meet me when you said you would?! You lost your keys for the third time this week?! Go ahead. Give me one good reason why I should believe your promises now!"*

Over time I've become less shrill. Life lies in wait for those of us who worship order and perfection. It roughs us up, so that frustrated, exasperated, and eventually surrendered, we come to view misty Pisces as a newly attractive place. I admire the artists and mystics who inhabit this realm. Like ocean frogs, they can't always explain their world, but from their blissed-out eyes and dreamy smiles, I can venture a few rough translations: Pisces floats; it goes with the flow. It forgives and forgets. It's a gentle state of transcendent one-ness that can soften the heart, expand the imagination, call us to a higher power, dial us into the collective unconscious, and summon the invisible weaver of our dreams. Through Pisces we can pierce beyond the veils of ego and materialism. We can dissolve ourselves into a vast dimension of unlimited love and possibility.

Pisces is soul-space. Whether we experience it as celestial or oceanic, distinctions like "up and down" or "before and after" are clearly less relevant here. These are terms from the pond realm. Pisces likes to work through trance. It enters us via the right side of our brain, in pictures, colors, sounds, emotion and intuitive vibrations. Its mode of reasoning is quite different from its left-brained opposite.

Virgo parses parts. Pisces holds wholes. Virgo analyzes and Pisces synthesizes (hence its compassion). Pisces loves to note the likeness in things. It speaks in metaphors and can sit comfortably with mysteries. A question unanswered is an opportunity to wonder and dream. Sensitive and porous, Pisces moves through the world like a cloud or fog bank, enveloping and absorbing what it finds. It has little concern for facts and practical efficiencies. Pisces has something better: Faith. When asked to investigate the world, it simply beholds.

Against life's chaos and disappointments, who can deny Pisces' appeal? Its yearning for divinity, its empathetic heart, its romantic belief in dreams-come-true offer hope and healing to a fractured world. It's no wonder that Oprah—the undisputed culture queen—devotes her satellite radio show to positive Pisces themes. Each week thousands tune into her "Soul Series" conversations with experts on enlightenment, meditation, dream intelligence, spirit guides, prayer, reincarnation, and the ages of soul.² Pluto may have entered reality-based Capricorn, but Uranus is still in Pisces, with Neptune waiting in the wings*. The collective interest in Pisces isn't disappearing soon. So if you too are thirsting for more Pisces magic, astrology has good news, even if you're heavily Virgo like me. Whatever the details of your chart, you've got a personal doorway into this realm of art and mysticism: It's your Pisces house, promising "*The journey to a soulful life starts here!*"

At least that's my theory. In practice, I've noticed something altogether different. As a constellation, Pisces has just a few bright stars, meaning it's difficult to see without a powerful telescope. Likewise in the chart, the Pisces house can be elusive. Over the years I've watched many approach their Pisces portal and balk, turning back to cast their lot with the pond frogs, unable or unwilling to gamble on the ocean. It's not just those with empty Pisces houses—it's people with Sun, Moon, or the Ascendant in Pisces. Initially I dismissed these individuals as anomalies. A veteran astrologer once told me that when people don't express their charts it means they're "unevolved." Such thinking goes against my grain. Maybe they're neither anomalies nor unevolved. Perhaps their resistance is actually a clue, like a stray thread which when pulled can unravel more of the Pisces fabric.

The Ethereal Thread of the Universe

Consider Warren. He's got Sun in Pisces in the 12th house (Pisces' natural home), with Pisces rising too. That's a good amount of Pisces. I spoke with Warren only briefly by phone and was intrigued to meet the person who would show up for our session. Was he a poet? A film-maker? An addict? A con artist? A spiritual seeker? The doorbell rang. I opened the door to a quiet man in a plain pressed shirt and khaki pants.

We chatted. He worked as an engineer, he said. He spent all day in front of a computer, looking at figures. "*Sometimes numbers can be downright mystical,*" I ventured. He looked puzzled, "*Not really.*" I asked if he had any interest in music, meditation, poetry, or fantasy. "*No,*" he replied. He had no hobbies. His life consisted of going to work and coming home. Evenings he spent in front of the TV, accompanied by a shot or two of scotch. His wife nagged him about that. She wished they'd do more together, but he was always tired.

I kept looking from Warren to his chart. Sun in the 12th can bring a subdued or introverted personality. Pisces risings can also wear masks, blending in and concealing their true feelings. But will expressions of Pisces creativity and/or mysticism entirely disappear, as seemed to have happened with Warren? Whenever reality confounds expectations, astrologers dart frantically through the chart, hoping to find the planet(s) that are actually running the show. Warren may have bought a little Pisces-style transcendence with his nightly TV and shots of scotch. But most of what he said issued from his 6th house Virgo Moon—an emotional orientation that's cautious, hard-working, and analytical. His wife (who might also embody a man's Moon) seemed to do the Virgo nag.

I asked Warren to tell me about a time, perhaps from childhood, when he felt really happy. After a few moments his eyes lit up. He recalled one summer when he and a friend planned to produce their own fantasy comic book series. *"We'd drawn all the characters and outlined a dozen storylines before school was officially out,"* he said. Then his voice trailed off. *"That was the summer my father made me get a job."* He shrugged. *"I worked as a box boy at my uncle's grocery store instead."*

He'd stood at his Pisces portal, but was yanked back into his 6th house Virgo Moon. Likely this wasn't the only time Warren's imagination had been dashed by duty and pragmatism. Perhaps whenever his inner artist had struggled to give itself form, it was squashed by Virgo-style judgments: *"Ridiculous! A waste of time! Such foolishness won't go anywhere!"* Instead of becoming an ocean frog, immersed in a fascinating, absorbing, albeit less practical world, he became an engineer, condemning his spirit to the trance of his dull routines.

Poor Warren, I thought. I wondered what would have happened had his parents been more enlightened. What if they'd consulted an astrologer when he was a boy? The astrologer would have explained that Warren was a sensitive, intuitive child, with plenty of imagination and compassion. He should have been encouraged to follow his inspirations, given the space to develop his inner world. Perhaps then his Virgo Moon, rather than controlling the show, could have served to ground his Pisces sensibilities in a nicely structured way.

I met Warren when I was a novice astrologer, which means I had a pretty limited imagination myself. I figured his chart wanted him to find happiness by becoming something Piscean—perhaps an illustrator, an ashram devotee, an actor, or some other character from my slim repertoire of Pisces imagoes. That was the 80's, when Pluto was in Scorpio and combining astrology with depth psychology was the order of the day. I pored over horoscopes like they were dark maps of the psyche's underworld, hoping to shine new light on any childhood wounds or traumas that might empower my clients with new understanding. Sadly we often wound up in a whiny cul-de-sac called "victim of bad parenting." Once Pluto entered Sagittarius, this grew increasingly weary. Besides I was a mother myself by then. I quickly saw the impossibility of parenting anywhere near the therapists' standards.

Pluto in Sagittarius called for new astrological strategies. My clients wanted help creating better futures rather than dredging up their pasts. I got less prescriptive and much more curious as my clients also became my teachers, expanding my understanding of the zodiac through their choices and behaviors. I listened for the beliefs that created their realities—which meant starting with the idea that their behavior was astrologically "right" rather than judging it as wrong. What I learned about people like Warren was that they were doing Pisces just as earnestly as the musicians, poets, and dreamers. Their porous sensitivity was less visible, but it hadn't disappeared. They simply sensed their surroundings and adjusted accordingly, swimming in the ocean where they found themselves. In a world that banishes soul and worships money, Pisces may shape-shift and go with the flow.

Such shape-shifting is actually Pisces' central myth. Its glyph and constellation show what seem like two fish going in different directions; they're really gods in disguise. When the monster Typhon raged toward Mount Olympus, Aphrodite and Eros transformed, making their escape as fish. They still shine faintly in our night sky as Pisces' V-shaped constellation, two fish bound by a loose cord at their tails. The eastern fish swims up toward heaven while the western one swims along the ecliptic. The directions they're heading in are as symbolic as the cord tying them together. The heaven-bound fish points to spiritual transcendence, while its partner cuts a more secular path along the ecliptic's material plane. The disguised gods are connected so as not to lose each other. Likewise in our Pisces house, we may preserve our own divinity by connecting ourselves to both directions—swimming along practical paths with mystical fins.

Pisces' glyph shows the fish bound tightly back to back. But in the sky, the constellation's looser binding at the tails more accurately depicts the challenge and latitude we have in holding both directions. We can keep our head in the clouds but lose our earthly bearings. We can choose security but abandon soul, or any variation in between. Creativity and free will grant us endless possibilities. I think of Emma with Sun and Venus in Pisces. She delights children with her tiara and fairy wings at the local crafts fair, but has suffered disastrous love affairs with a series of weak and dishonest partners. There's Wilson, a charming Pisces rising who runs a successful ad agency by day and finds his heaven

at night in women, wine and weed. DANA GERHARDT

There's gentle Timothy, with Sun, Moon and Mercury in Pisces, who mostly disappears, venturing out to take a clerk's job for a year or two, and collapsing back into his parents' home when he can no longer keep a schedule.

Most of us have less dramatic Pisces tales. But likely they still fall short of the divinity that's possible. How do we actualize this sign's promise of transcendence? That Aphrodite and Eros, the goddess of love and her love-inspiring son, are the fish in Pisces' glyph suggests another clue: Love may be the central activity of this sign. We can be called to love throughout our charts, but in our Pisces house, the misty, turbulent and confusing swirl of circumstances we meet may raise its need most deeply. Pisces requires an apprenticeship of love, which is why service, compassion, sacrifice, even martyrdom, are prevalent Pisces expressions. Spiritual love is powerful, but most human love is fragile. There are enough inner and outer Typhons rampaging through our worlds, that like a threatened Aphrodite and Eros, we may simply shift shape and hide out.

It's a fair Pisces question: How do we strengthen our capacity to love, given the sometimes monstrous dissatisfactions, depressions and

✕ longings that can also cloud our experience of this sign?

THE SIGNS AND HERCULES' TWELVE LABORS

Love and *Unlimited Possibilities*

Now that Pluto is in Capricorn, I feel my astrology strategies shifting once again. It's too early to know exactly where they'll go, but I sense a desire for greater pragmatism. When clients call, they're ready to take new responsibility. They want to know what they can do about their situations. Perhaps that's why I'm drawn to Hercules, one of our original action heroes. I'm not the first to turn to Hercules for zodiac advice. A long tradition connects his twelve labors to each of the zodiac signs. Most recently and prominently, ✕ metaphysician Alice Bailey used his labors as an allegory for the path of spiritual development.³ My goal is much less grand. I simply wonder if Hercules can guide us to some new action in our Pisces house.

So here's the tale. Hercules was ordered to retrieve the prized red cattle of Geryon as his Pisces labor. A winged giant with no less than three bodies, Geryon lived on an island at the ends of the earth. Hercules made his way on foot, battling wild beasts and marauders, until he went as far as any mortal had ever gone. Stopped by a formidable mountain, he cut through it to the other side, creating the mighty Pillars of Hercules. It was hot there. Some say in a fit of pique he shot an arrow at the burning sun. Others say he simply rested and prayed. But all agree on what happened next. The Sun god Apollo dropped down a fabulous gold goblet as reward. Our hero climbed into it and floated the rest of the way towards Erythia and Geryon's cows. Once he arrived, his task was easy: Bam! He clubbed the dangerous two-headed dog.

Bam! Bam! He killed the artful shepherd. Geryon came running.

Hercules shot one arrow that pierced all three of the monster's formidable bodies. Thwack! Thwack! Thwack! Hercules herded the red cows into his golden cup, sailed back to the tall mountain, returned Apollo's gift, and began the cattle drive back home. You'd think his work was nearly done, but going back across the land, he was attacked by DANA GERHARDT thieves. His best bull escaped and ran all the way to Italy; Hercules had to wrestle and kill a king to get it back. Next Hera sent a terrible gadfly that scattered the crimson cows in all directions. The hero had to drain a river in order to finally get them home.

This is more action than we typically think of undertaking in our Pisces house! But the promise of the red cows is enticing. Cows offer sustenance; red is the color of desire, vitality, and power. The red cows symbolize the nourishing power of love and unlimited possibilities—the Pisces treasure. Look at your Pisces house or planets. Is there a dream you'd like to manifest? How far are you willing to go for it? Would you journey beyond space and time to see it come true? Hercules was ready to go to the ends of the earth—which in your Pisces house means going beyond the limits of your ordinary mind and entering a higher consciousness. The first step is simple: just become willing to create a new reality. After that you need the strength of intention and awareness, which Hercules models as he sets out across the land, defeating wild beasts and marauders

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along the way. These foes may seem surprising and strange, but they're actually familiar characters. They're the lower desires and negative thoughts that constantly restrict your best potentials. They are your addictions—the substances and habits that waylay you, or the thoughts that routinely close you down. If you can keep alert and forward-moving, you'll erect a structure of determination and intent that's as mighty as Hercules' Pillars.

You must go beyond your pillars, however, which means letting your intentions go. Releasing your dreams this way is like dropping a magic pebble into water, so that it can ripple out and shift the world, energizing the possibility of something even better coming back. It's an admission that your dreams may not be big enough! You do of course need to believe in magic—which attracts the next event: divine intervention or grace. When he's gone as far as man has ever gone, Hercules receives a divine vessel. This symbol of the golden cup suggests any number of otherworldly Pisces boons: synchronicity, imagination, intuition, spiritual guidance. Like the cup, these Piscean resources are both containers and vehicles. They carry you to ¹⁹⁵ your Pisces treasure. Intuition, for example, can bring, as Paulo Coelho writes, "...a sudden immersion of the soul into the universal current of life, where the histories of all people are connected, and (you) are able to know everything, because it's all written there."⁴

The goblet is a gift from the Sun god,
 emblem for the ego. In one version of the story,
 Hercules attacks the Sun; in another, he simply soaks it in
 and prays. Which tactic is better for you depends on your balance
 of heaven and earth. If your orientation is overly secular, you may need
 to diminish your ego's beams with an ego-dissolving practice like chant
 or meditation. If you're ungrounded and overly mystical, your egoic
 boundaries may be porous and thin. Particularly if you have mascu-
 line planets like Sun, Mars, or Saturn in Pisces, you may need
 to strengthen your self. For you, the land journey toward
 your pillars may bring the greatest growth; after
 that, you can rest in your devotion
 and wait for grace.

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Either way,
 once you release
 your intentions, you must
 enter a special Pisces state. When
 Hercules climbs into the golden goblet,
 he stops advancing in a conscious way. He
 comes to stillness. He sits. This is like the voyaging
 done in dreams, meditation, or trance. Robert Becker,
 a pioneering surgeon in nontraditional healing, has ob-
 served, "*Many 'primitive' peoples... believe that almost every normal adult has
 the ability to go into a trance state and be possessed by a god; the adult who cannot
 do this is a psychological cripple.*"⁵ In other words, his red cows
 remain with Geryon.

THE SIGNS AND HERCULES' TWELVE LABORS

Recently I met
 Rebecca. Her South Node, Sun, Venus and Mercu-
 ry are in Virgo with a lone North Node in Pisces. Despite her
 doctor's orders and the limits of her aching body, she confessed
 she couldn't sit still. She worked eight-hour days and at home ✠
 was always on the move, chasing from chore to chore. When she
 wasn't working, her mind was spinning with worries and obliga-
 tions. "*My family needs me,*" she said. "*They're falling apart,*" she com-
 plained, "*yet no one ever listens to my advice.*" I asked her if she ever
 just sat still, with a cup of tea perhaps, and enjoyed the
 bliss that all her work had brought her. She shook
 her head. "*No... I just can't!*"

Without stopping and
 stepping away from ordinary life,
 reaching a peak Pisces experience is diffi-
 cult. After resting in his cup, Hercules arrives at
 the island of unlimited possibilities and quickly van-
 quishes three foes. In an alert but higher state, he transcends
 space and time, accomplishing in minutes what might have
 taken years or an army of men. I am reminded of what my med-
 itation teacher often says—that meditating is not just zoning
 out, it's waking up. For trance to bring a peak experi-
 ence, we must be awake and open, alertly re-
 ceptive to a non-ordinary reality.

Dr. Jean Houston, a philosopher and researcher in human capacities, has often speculated that our brain's tremendous yet underutilized instrumentation is designed to bring us into a much vaster universe—perhaps with parallel dimensions, multiple realities, and undreamed-of potentials. It's no surprise that Houston has Jupiter in Pisces. It's been her life's mission to expand our belief in what's possible.

After a peak experience, we must always re-enter the world. This can be the most difficult leg of the journey—transporting our Pisces treasure into the present. Our red cows may be an ecstatic realization, a vision or message from spirit guides, or a transformation, bringing an overwhelming love for the world or simply new joy. This gift brings new potency, but like Hercules, we will be challenged. Thieves, runaway bulls, and gadflies symbolize how quickly our gift can vanish if we're not vigilant. But success is too sweet not to try. It's how we just might realize our own divinity. I like how Jean Houston rewrites the Pisces Aphrodite/Eros story with a single line:

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*"We are not just gods-in-hiding, we are gods-in-making."*⁶

Notes

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- 1 . Coleman Barks, trans., **The Essential Rumi**, (HarperCollins, 1995), p.193.
- 2 . <http://www.oprah.com>
- 3 . Alice Bailey, **The Labours of Hercules: An Astrological Interpretation**, (Lucis Trust, 1974).
- 4 . Paulo Coelho, **The Alchemist** (HarperCollins, 1993), p.77.
- 5 . Robert O. Becker and Gary Selden, **The Body Electric** (Quill, 1985), pp. 264-270.
- 6 . Jean Houston, **The Power of Yin** (Cosimo, 1977), p. 49

*Editor's note: The article was written in 2008

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Vou começar logo, porque a lista vai ser longa.

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O sentido de tudo isso é uma coisa que ainda tá pra ser revelada.

